MARCH 1961

Commentary

THE STRATEGY OF DETERRENCE

A Dissenting Statement by H. STUART HUGHES

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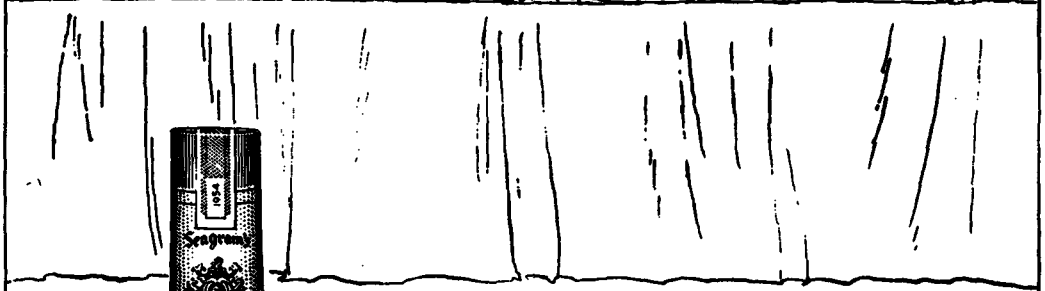

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A Report on **COMMENTARY** 1960

. . . the first of a series of reports to our readers indicating which **Commentary** articles had the widest impact in the press, government, universities, and civic and religious organizations—both here and abroad.

PASSION AT OBERAMMERGAU by Robert Gorham Davis

This article triggered discussion in more than 30 publications including the 'New York Times,' the 'Chicago News,' 'Time,' 'Newsweek,' the 'San Francisco Chronicle,' the 'Detroit Times,' the 'Saturday Review,' 'Der Frankfurter Rundschau,' and 'Der Spiegel.' Finally, the 'New York Post' reported on May 16, 1960: "Anti-Jewish Lines Cut in Passion Play."

YOUTH IN THE ORGANIZED SOCIETY by Paul Goodman

This three-article series became source material for college courses and conferences on at least 17 campuses from Vermont to California. Departments of Anthropology, Education, History, Human Relations, Hygiene, Medicine, Philosophy, Psychology and Sociology—all found new ideas or a fresh approach in the **Commentary** series. The articles form the core of a book, 'Growing Up Absurd,' recently published by Random House.

Other 1960 articles that reached audiences far beyond the **Commentary** readership:

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H. STUART HUGHES

The Strategy of Deterrence

A Dissenting Statement

THE PAST YEAR has seen the publication of a spate of books on war, armaments, and the future course of American foreign policy. They have in common a sense of urgency—a sense that the nation has reached a major point of decision in which the old and tried formulas no longer suffice. Certainly the turn of the decade coinciding with a presidential election year has helped inspire this conviction of unaccustomed challenge. In addition there has been the mounting suspicion that the United States has slipped behind in its competition with the Soviet Union—in the arms race, in economic expansion, and in winning friends among the new or uncommitted nations—and with it a widespread doubt as to whether our government itself knew where it was going. Finally the launching of a militant "peace movement," extending through a wide gamut of organizations from the sober and cautious Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy to the more radical Committee of Correspondence, has shown the need for a counter-offensive on the part of the "cold warriors" and the proponents of a dynamic defense policy.

The current flood of new books, then, has had to take into account both confusion in public policy and the challenge from peace and disarmament spokesmen. The result has been salutary: the level of discussion has gone up, and the great debate of the 1960's which these books have inaugurated promises to combine an unprecedented technical sophistication with a sensitive awareness of moral ambiguities. Such is notably the case with the work which is widest in its range—Henry A. Kissinger's *The Necessity for Choice*.* The product of sustained reflection on America's foreign policy prospects, it marks a departure from its author's earlier insistence on the possibilities of limited nuclear war. Kissinger's new book shows a cumulative revision of his views in the direction of both humility and humanity.

In contrast with the range and detail of Kissinger's work—whose concluding chapters (the best in the book) extend beyond the question of war and arms control to discuss the role of the uncommitted nations in international affairs and of intellectuals in policy formation—Richard J. Barnet's *Who Wants Disarmament?*† claims to offer no more than a summary of the disarmament stalemate over the past decade and a half, plus a reasoned and heartfelt plea for resuming such negotiation in earnest before it is too late. Barnet writes with a moral conviction and a clar-

H. STUART HUGHES here continues the series (inaugurated last month by Hans J. Morgenthau) of re-appraisals of various aspects of American foreign policy. Professor of history at Harvard University and the author, among other books, of *Oswald Spengler* (1952), *The United States and Italy* (1953), and *Consciousness and Society* (1958), Mr. Hughes has been contributing articles and reviews to COMMENTARY since 1954.

* Harper, 370 pp., $5.50.
† Beacon Press, 141 pp., $3.50.

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ity which are extremely rare in a field where most authors get hopelessly bogged in technical complexities. From the standpoint of an insider rather than an outside critic, Thomas E. Murray's *Nuclear Policy for War and Peace** has similar virtues; Murray served as an Atomic Energy Commissioner for seven years, and as the "conscience" of that body unremittingly urged that the Commission and the government in general confront the ethical implications of American arms policy.

With Thomas C. Schelling's *The Strategy of Conflict,*† we are in another world—the world of the RAND Corporation's cool and ultra-professional assessment of risk-taking. Schelling deals with the problems of thermonuclear war in the context of contemporary game-, decision-, and communication-theory; his book brings to bear on war and strategy the new logical and mathematical techniques of social science. Much of it will necessarily seem abstruse and irrelevant to the layman. But even the intellectually lazy would do well to read Schelling's opening remarks on "The Retarded Science of International Strategy" and his concluding analysis entitled "Surprise Attack: A Study in Mutual Distrust." Moreover, Schelling's dispassionate presentation can serve as a psychological decompression chamber for those who may hesitate to dive into the most important and the most troubling book of the lot, *On Thermonuclear War,*** by Herman Kahn.

I THINK one can say without qualification that Kahn has written one of the great works of our time. Its title sounds like plagiary of Clausewitz's *On War,* and if Kahn aspires to be the master military strategist of the mid-20th century, I certainly know of no better claimant. For several years now, as a RAND expert in the field of nuclear armament, Kahn has been dazzling and bewildering a series of highly selected audiences with marathon "briefings" that have become legendary in military circles. His book offers an almost literal transcription of three of these lectures, plus tables, charts, priority listings, aphorisms and asides, and explanatory appendices. From the literary standpoint, this method of presentation is far from ideal. It entails both gaps and repetitions; the style oscillates wildly between the overexplained and the elliptical, the colloquial and the jargon of social and military science, the jocular and the heavily serious. But such has been the character of most similar great books in the past: their message has been too overpowering to come out in tidy form. Their very dishevelment has been one of the marks of their significance.

What Kahn tries to do—and what, so far as I know, no one else has tried to do in so thoroughgoing a fashion—is to look thermonuclear war in the eye and to treat it as a reality rather than a bad dream. He asks himself the question: after such a war, "Will the survivors envy the dead?" and he answers, no—at least if we begin right away to take the proper precautions. "Despite a widespread belief to the contrary," he argues, "objective studies indicate that even though the amount of human tragedy would be greatly increased in the postwar world, the increase would not preclude normal and happy lives for the majority of survivors and their descendants." Hence he offers us a table of "tragic but distinguishable postwar states"—ranging from two million to 160 million dead—and he urges us to abandon the idea that the "only choices available" are "immediate surrender, immediate preventive war, or eventual world annihilation." A child, he says, could tell the difference between ten and sixty million casualties, yet "few adults seem . . . able to do this." When he has pressed them, however, most Americans he has interviewed have settled on something like the latter figure as the highest they can imagine being worth a war (most

* World Publishing Company, 241 pp., $4.00.
† Harvard University Press, 309 pp., $6.25.
** Princeton University Press, 651 pp., 10.00.

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Europeans set *their* total a good deal lower). And this gives him his solid starting point. Building out from the notion of a "bearable" number of deaths, Kahn proceeds to analyze in rather reassuring style the genetic dangers from radioactivity and to urge the merits of a minimum program for constructing underground shelters.

Hence his book deals not only with thermonuclear war itself but with the possibilities of postwar recovery. The most fascinating, in fact, of the analytical devices he has thought up for dealing with his novel data concerns the "recuperative powers" of nations like the United States and the Soviet Union. Each, he says, can be divided into "two countries, an 'A' country consisting of 50 to 100 of the largest cities, and a 'B' country made up of the remaining rural areas, towns, and small cities. . . . While the A country cannot survive without a B country, the B country can not only survive without the A country; it also seems to have the resources and skills it needs to rebuild the A country in about ten years. . . . In fact, the problem the B country faces in rebuilding the A country is probably less difficult than the one met by the Soviet Union in constructing the Soviet Union of 1955 from its 1945 base." For the United States, such a job of reconstruction would be a bit harder; we are a more urbanized nation. But the difficulties would still not be insuperable.

The reader's first reaction is to be appalled by the apparent callousness of such statements. It is true that Kahn underestimates the effects of frightful devastation on the emotions of the survivors. Despite his efforts to convey to us the notion of thermonuclear war as a present reality, he is unconvincing in his suggestion that a nation like our own, after losing its great urban centers and a third of its people, would go briskly about the task of picking up the pieces. The survivors, he tells us, could be mobilized for effort by the reassurance of radiation meters (which he finds even more urgent than shelters for a civil defense program). And he cites a hypothetical conversation with a man apparently in a state of post-attack shock: "You have received only ten roentgens, why are you vomiting? Pull yourself together and get to work."

Yet we should be wrong merely to recoil in protest. As Kahn most persuasively argues, the notion that it is "all too horrible" has barred the way to a proper understanding of the perils we confront. On the one hand, it has encouraged a doctrinaire pacifism. On the other hand, and far more dangerously, it has produced among military men and policy makers a tragic all-or-nothing stance—the conviction that we and the Soviet Union are linked by a "mutual suicide pact." Kahn's insistence that there are other choices available is echoed, from their widely differing standpoints, by such fellow strategists as Kissinger and Schelling, by an advocate of disarmament like Barnet, and by Murray, with his personal knowledge and background of public responsibility. All believe that something can be done to save us from annihilation. Yet all—with the possible exception of Barnet, who is unclear on this point—refuse to abandon a policy of thermonuclear deterrence. Deterrence remains at the center of their arguments: to appreciate their more specific recommendations, we must understand first what they mean by deterrence and where and when they think it should be applied.

II

"Deterrence," Kissinger tells us, "requires a combination of power, the will to use it, and the assessment of these by the potential aggressor. . . . There can be no gap in deterrence. Deterrence is either effective or it is not. There is no margin for error. Mistakes are likely to be irremediable. If the gains of aggression appear to outweigh the penalties even once, deterrence will fail."

Kahn or Schelling or Murray could

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have written the same. And likewise with the limits to the deterrent ideal. "The notion that there is only *one* form of deterrence—the threat of nuclear retaliation—must be abandoned. . . . Flexibility in both diplomacy and strategy requires that a maximum number of stages be created between surrender and Armageddon." It is Kahn in particular who elaborates these stages. A large part of his book is devoted to explaining the distinctions between "minimum" and "finite" deterrence, and between a "credible first strike capability" and a largely mythical capability which relies on the mere *existence* of thermonuclear bombs.

There is too much of the latter type of thinking, our authors agree, in American military circles today. Kahn calls it "Maginot-mindedness" and cites the aphorism attributed to one of the high brass in the Pentagon or at SAC: "If these buttons are ever pressed, they have *completely failed* in their purpose! The equipment is useful only if it is not used." American strategic doctrine, they find, suffers from both rigidity and defensiveness; it is unprepared for the kind of ambiguous challenge—something short of a real attack on our own country or on one of our allies—which is the form of threat we are most likely to confront in the next decade. To unleash the "deterrent" against such an indirect challenge would be obviously excessive. Kahn and Schelling think that we should be prepared instead to bomb selective enemy targets in the confidence that our "pre-attack mobilization base" will be sufficiently strong to withstand the shock of our adversary's retaliation—our national "posture" should be solid enough to make our counter-challenge "credible." Kissinger and Murray, while agreeing on the need to strengthen our "posture" and "harden" our air and missile bases, emphasize rather the possibilities of limiting devastation by restricting the types of weapons employed.

Quite naturally, then, these writers are impatient both with Dulles-type threats of "massive retaliation" and with the bland diplomacy by round-robin travel which Eisenhower inaugurated after his Secretary of State's death. By implication they are scarcely less critical of the Truman-Acheson policy of "containment," which they find almost as rigid and whose relative success they attribute to a temporary Soviet inferiority in nuclear weapons which has now come to an end. In particular they focus on the years 1953–55 as a period of missed opportunities. Following Stalin's death, they argue, the Soviet leaders were unsure of their course and ready for negotiation and accommodation; the Russian military had not yet convinced the Communist chiefs that their country could stand up to the threat of thermonuclear war. From the standpoint of a disarmament advocate, Barnet voices similar regrets; in the first three years of Eisenhower's presidency, the Soviet leaders came closer than they ever had before or have done since to accepting the Western point of view.

EVEN IF ONE grants the contention that the past decade and a half has been an almost unbroken succession of American mistakes and missed opportunities, the literary strategists of 1960 and 1961 offer small comfort for the future. Nearly all the proposed substitutes for a conventional strategy of deterrence they reject as mere palliatives or even as remedies more dangerous than the disease. Disengagement, a ban on testing, disarmament through inspection—none of these stands the test of their disabused analysis. There are differences on details: Kissinger, for example, advocates converting NATO into a true North Atlantic federation and the fusion of its nuclear capability with that of the United States; Kahn speculates that a neutralization of Europe might actually be to our interest; Barnet thinks that the Soviet proposal for complete disarmament should not be rejected out of hand. The net impression they convey, however, is bleakness itself: no obvious solution will

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work; there are no short-cuts to salvation.

What is left? Only self-imposed limits on weaponry and the new shibboleth of "arms control"—a term which is fast replacing "disarmament" in the language of the *conoscenti*.* Kissinger and Murray show a characteristic interest in self-limitation: the former argues for strengthening our capability in conventional arms; the latter puts his hope in thermonuclear weapons of small yield, stressing (along with Kahn) that the critical point in devastation lies not between kiloton weapons and conventional bombs measured in tons, but between nuclear warheads of kiloton and megaton range. Schelling and Kahn are less concerned with such humanitarian niceties. To them a scheme of bilateral or multilateral arms control seems alone worth working for; it is arms control or nothing, if, as Kahn graphically puts it, we are ever to reach 1975.

YET WHEN these authors begin to elaborate specific arms control proposals, it is something quite different from a disarmed world which emerges. The main goal, it appears, is not a reduction of weapons. It is stability and symmetry and invulnerability. The greatest danger of conflict arises not when arms are at a peak, but when one side or another has a "weapons system" that is vulnerable to surprise attack; the very worst situation of all is a state of "mutual vulnerability." Hence it may actually be necessary at times to raise the level of armaments rather than to lower it. Specifically, in the case of missiles (the reasoning is Schelling's), we must be sure that each side has enough for a second try: "The larger the number on both sides, the greater is the absolute number of missiles expected to be left over for retaliation in the event that either side should strike first, and therefore the greater is the deterrence to an attempted first strike." Similarly, with a greater number of missiles at large, the chance of one side's cheating is reduced.

Cheating, of course, is the *bête noire* of the arms controllers. It is curious that writers like Kahn and Kissinger and Schelling can find it possible to be such persuasive advocates of arms control at the same time as they seem to believe in the almost unlimited guile of the Soviet Union. The schemes they propose are fascinating in their elaborateness and technical sophistication; I find myself particularly attracted to Kissinger's plan for "inventory" inspection, whereby each side would check at intervals on the size and character of its opponent's armory, which would be collected for the purpose in specified areas. A fixed and complicated protocol would govern such transactions. As Schelling puts it, "Where trust and good faith do not exist and cannot be made to by our acting as though they did, we may wish to solicit advice from the underworld, or from ancient despotisms. . . . The ancients exchanged hostages, drank wine from the same glass to demonstrate the absence of poison, met in public places to inhibit the massacre of one by the other, and even deliberately exchanged spies to facilitate transmittal of authentic information."

Would safeguards drawn from classical or gangster inspiration, one wonders, ever be sufficient to foil the endless inventiveness our authors attribute to the Soviet adversary? Kahn in particular seems to take a perverse delight in detailing all the dirty tricks our potential enemy might play on us—altering the weather, "spoofing and jamming" to confuse our defense system, even dispatching "juvenile delinquent Eskimos" to destroy Arctic radar installations. Have the Russians *really* thought up such stratagems? Or are our military theorists perhaps suggesting to them ideas for cheating which they might never have come to on their own?—as, I understand, happened when the American technical delegation wrecked a test ban agreement that was all but reached, by

* See the Fall 1960 special issue of *Daedalus* on arms control, to which Kahn, Kissinger, and Schelling are all contributors.

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suddenly advancing the theory of the "big hole." Our strategists are trying to have it both ways. They are attempting to convince us both that the Soviet Union is bound to cheat and that we can find adequate measures to cope with such cheating.

Ultimately, then, the complex reasoning of the strategists of deterrence boils down to two irreducible points. First, there is the nightmare that perpetually hangs over us—Soviet nuclear blackmail, perhaps accompanied (as a grim token of serious intention) by the evacuation of their cities, at which, it appears, they are far more adept than we. Second, there is the distant goal of safety: in Kahn's words, "Many who have thought about this problem" (and other, parenthetical references suggest he is one of them) "have come to the conclusion that reliable stability can only come through an international agency with an effective monopoly of force, or total disarmament." Between these two ultimates lies the vast gray area of fear and doubt in which all men of good will—whether unilateralists, multilateral disarmers, or arms controllers —now find themselves condemned to live.

III

IT WOULD BE EASY—all too easy —to dismiss the Kissingers and the Kahns and the Schellings as bloodthirsty men who have computing machines where their hearts should be. *I* know that this is not so; I am personally acquainted with all but one of the writers I am discussing, and I know that they are both intellectually honest and morally responsible. In terms of intellectual rigor, the only fault I find in them is a tendency to slant their interpretations in favor of the United States. In terms of moral choices, I need say no more than that they have made the opposite choice from mine. But this does not mean that I think them immoral—far from it. Faced with the frightful dilemmas of peace and war today, the best any man can do is to make his personal choice in the agony of his own conscience, convinced that whatever he does will be in some sense wrong, that, like Pascal, he is making a desperate wager in the dark, and that no one will forgive him if he proves to have been in error.

The new strategists of deterrence offer one of the best reservoirs of brains in the country. Alongside their reasoning, the arguments of most "peace" people seem vacuous and sentimental—one need only contrast their intellectual astringency with the caution and tentativeness of Barnet's two concluding chapters. The advocates of peace and disarmament will never be taken seriously until they can meet and answer the magisterial authority of a Herman Kahn. I should like to make a beginning in that direction. For I believe that there are cracks in the impressive façade of deterrence apologetics—cracks which the strategists themselves are honest enough to recognize but whose implications they have not fully spelled out.

I noted a moment back Kahn's rather surprising suggestion that "reliable stability" can come only through total disarmament or a supra-national authority. In the short term, then, there will be no stability. By 1973, he warns us, we shall be living in a world in which "there are quite likely to be about 50,000 ready missiles . . . each with its own button." Unless in the meantime a nearly foolproof system of arms control has been established, the "balance of terror" a decade hence promises to be more terrible than what we are living under today.

In such a situation—if I have not completely misunderstood the reasoning of Kahn and the others—the mutual annihilation or "mutual suicide pact" which they have tried to exclude as a present-day possibility would have become the dominating reality of our lives. We should be forced to ask ourselves a question that is almost taboo today: are the matters at issue between us and the Communist world worth such a sacrifice? At the present time, it appears, most Americans think so; they

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are prepared for the deaths of ten to sixty million of their fellow-countrymen in a slaughter which would indeed fall short of Armageddon. In another half generation, will they feel the same way about a truly apocalyptic battle?

Here Murray offers a helpful suggestion. As a good Catholic, he is gravely concerned with the moral implications of nuclear responsibilities. He reminds us of the theological distinctions between just and unjust wars, three of which are relevant here. First: will more good be accomplished by fighting than by refusing to fight? Second: will the violence applied be no more than is strictly necessary to achieve its end? Third: will "the degree of force employed . . . bear some proportionate relation to the injustice . . . perpetrated?"

ALL OF THESE questions, I think, have to be answered in the negative in the case of any foreseeable conflict between our country and the Soviet Union. What does this leave us, then?—no more than reliance on a mutual trust which the strategists of deterrence dismiss as a snare and a delusion. Murray, like the others, has little confidence in Russian promises, but he at least thinks it worthwhile to remind us of the further theological requirement that "good faith be kept with an enemy." If good faith remains both our inescapable moral duty and the only hope we have, we need to take another look at Soviet public statements and at the current Soviet "posture" to see whether there may not be something in them that the strategists of deterrence have missed.

Kahn makes a great deal of the fact that in the past five years the Russians have been taking the possibility of nuclear warfare with deadly seriousness and "claim to have given every adult in the Soviet Union between 20 and 40 hours of instruction in civil defense." In his view, this means that Khrushchev and his colleagues are prepared to use blackmail or "dirty trick" tactics and thereby run the risk of thermonuclear retaliation. But such evidence can be read differently. It can suggest a genuine fear of attack, more particularly with the spread of nuclear arms to America's European allies. As Barnet reminds us, "The possibility that the Kremlin might decide to risk the adventure of atomic war cannot be discounted, but from the Soviet point of view a nuclear contest seems an irrational means of expanding its power in view of the available alternatives." Communists—unlike Nazis—have never made a cult of war for its own sake, and the economic burden of the arms race and the threat of the extension of nuclear weapons to further powers offer powerful arguments for restraint in military policy.

There is a case, then, for a minimum trust in the Soviet Union. Indeed, Kahn and Schelling seem to recognize it when they imply that a thermonuclear war would be terminated after one or two "strikes" back and forth. Peace would evidently be negotiated in the traditional fashion, and the two nations would go about the business of disposing of their millions of dead and repairing their battered economies. The picture is too "normal" to be credible. Are we really to believe that after sustaining the most dreadful physical and psychological shock of human history, the populations of the United States and the Soviet Union could settle down once more almost as though nothing had happened? What about the boundless grief and the madness and the despair? (I am reminded of the Black Death and the sense of hopelessness that settled over Europe in the mid-14th century.) It is no more difficult to give some credence to Soviet professions of faith than to believe in the postwar future conjured up by the strategists of deterrence.

The same is true with the never-never land of arms control. I find it impossible to imagine a world in which each side carefully nurtures a "weapons system" which it will never use, while its putative enemy stands watchfully by with a benevolent avuncular interest. In such circumstances,

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I think, life itself would begin to serve these systems: their cost, both economic and psychological, would be so enormous that rulers and peoples would eventually find the greater part of their energies absorbed in perfecting and in guarding a vast establishment that served no rational purpose. Or rather, one that served a purpose so exquisitely rational that somewhere along the way its original logic had been lost. By then, as Riesman puts it, we would be in the realm of "mad rationalism."

As arms control has a specious air of logic, so it holds out a false promise of stability. Even its apologists find it adequate only in a bi-polar world and wrestle in vain with the problems of spiraling technology and of an "Nth" nuclear power—most obviously Germany or Communist China. Arms control is not simply another word for disarmament. It is a substitute for disarmament and an equivocal one at that. In the words of Seymour Melman,* it is an "essentially military plan . . . a new theory for the . . . arms race."

RATHER THAN following the will-o'-the-wisp of equal strength and "stabilized deterrence" which arms control promises, we need to look once again at real disarmament. The American scientists at the recent Pugwash Conference in Moscow came back with the conviction that their Soviet opposite numbers were in earnest about disarming and that the Soviet government had made it a central policy goal. The Russian technical men, they found, worried about the same things as the Americans—nuclear arms in the hands of Nth powers, a war brought on by accident, the spiral of technological advance—and they were receptive to the idea of finding a compromise between the American insistence on establishing an inspection system *before* disarmament and the Soviet emphasis on immediate progress in arms reduction.†

In this connection, a few statements of Barnet—whose modesty and tentativeness may lead us to underestimate the importance of what he has to say—are directly relevant. He reminds us that deterrence has not worked. It has not prevented the expansion of Soviet influence in the Middle East, in Southeast Asia, and in Latin America. And he underlines the fact that all partial measures to reduce the danger of war "share a common assumption . . . the assumption . . . that the arms race will go on." "It seems plain," he concludes, "that attempts at disarmament proposals which try to hedge against all conceivable risks will not only fail to build confidence but will actually further inflame the atmosphere. Any agreement for meaningful disarmament requires an awareness of the risks involved, as objective an assessment of those risks as it is given to humans to make, and, ultimately, an act of faith."

"An act of faith"—such is the only solution I can see to the irreducible dilemma in which Kahn and Kissinger and Schelling have left us, with their fear of Soviet blackmail on the one hand and their implication of the necessity of world order on the other. I can find no alternative to the renunciation of thermonuclear deterrence as an instrument of national strategy. The risks in such a course are appalling. There is no final answer to the argument from blackmail and to accusations of "appeasement" and "surrender." The only remotely satisfactory reply is that these risks are preferable to the horror of thermonuclear war itself. Those of us who advocate the abandonment of deterrence must realize that we have set forth on uncharted ground and that we may find ourselves pushed step by step into a moral radicalism which few of our fellow citizens will understand and which may end in transcending more than one of the loyalties that most Americans take for granted.

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* Editor of *Inspection for Disarmament* (Columbia University Press, 1958).

† See the excerpts from the January 1961 television program "Report from Moscow: Disarmament and World Security" published in the January 25, 1961 *Christian Science Monitor.*

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BEN GURION AGAINST THE DIASPORA

Three Comments

In an address before the World Zionist Congress, which met last December in Jerusalem, David Ben Gurion reiterated his belief that Jewish life in the Diaspora has a dim future. COMMENTARY *invited three prominent American Jewish intellectuals—each of whom speaks out of a different relationship to Zionist ideology—to explore some of the wider implications of Ben Gurion's speech and of the great excitement which followed upon its publication in the press.* OSCAR HANDLIN *is professor of history at Harvard and Director of the Center for the Study of the History of Liberty in America; among his many books is* The Uprooted *which won the Pulitzer Prize in history in 1952.* MILTON HIMMELFARB *is one of our contributing editors, as well as an editor of the* American Jewish Year Book; *he also conducts the department "In the Community" which appears regularly in these pages at four-month intervals.* CHARLES E. SHULMAN, *rabbi of the Riverdale Temple in New York, is a well-known Zionist and the author of several books, the most recent being* What It Means to Be a Jew.

Oscar Handlin: At first sight, the worldwide repercussions of David Ben Gurion's statement chiding the Jews of the Diaspora for their failure to come to Israel, seemed altogether out of proportion either to its novelty or to its implication. Surely it is no news by now that the Prime Minister holds the views he then expressed.

He has never made any secret of his feelings on this matter. Ben Gurion has always been, and remains, convinced that it is the duty of Zionists to migrate to the Promised Land. He doubts that a whole Jewish life can be led outside the borders of the State of Israel. He anticipates, therefore, that the remnant of Jewry who do not take refuge there will disappear in the near future. A gradual process of assimilation will deprive those in the free countries of their identity; and those in the unfree areas of the world simply face extermination. Whatever position others may take, it is therefore the preeminent obligation of Zionists to save themselves by *aliyah*.

It follows as a matter of course from these assumptions that men for whom survival is a religious duty ought to move to Israel, the only earthly setting in which survival will hereafter be possible. Hence Ben Gurion's particular reference to Jews with religious commitments. That he had never made this last point as explicitly as now does not detract from the fact that it was nevertheless always present in his thinking and in his public utterances.

In the past, Ben Gurion made no bones about the issue. It was true that shortly after the recognition of the State of Israel he issued a joint statement with Jacob Blaustein which offered a basis for a working collaboration with non-Zionist Jews. But that involved no contradiction with his fundamental assumption about the necessity for *aliyah*. In the eyes of the Prime Minister, those who are not Zionists have chosen a different road from his own. They may be right, although he thinks that they are wrong. But the risks and the responsibilities of the future rest upon their own shoulders.

It is altogether different when it comes to Zionists. Mere participation in that movement seems to him to involve a commitment which can only be interpreted in one way—migration to Israel. Without that culminating move, Zionism becomes no more than sentimentalism, indistinguishable from the other varieties of humanitarian support the new nation receives. Indeed the Zionists seem less generous in their aid, for

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they demand as a price the privilege of meddling in the affairs of the State.

Ben Gurion's conception goes back a long way in the history of Zionism. Even forty years ago it set the Zionists of Europe apart from those of America and led to bitter conflicts. It has been troublesome ever since.

At the Ideological Conference in Jerusalem in August 1957, Ben Gurion participated in a somewhat similar debate. At that time, he looked forward to two movements of population into Israel, from Russia and from the West. The first was, he thought, a subject for negotiation at the government level; and he still felt curiously optimistic about the prospects. He expressed the hope that with the opening of the Soviet gates, "at least half of Russian Jewry will come to Israel." With regard to migration from the United States, he was more qualified in his expectations. There, he pointed out, the "members of the bodies that belong to the Zionist Organization are no different from those Jews who do not belong to that Organization." But he left no doubt then that proper training would persuade the best of the youth and the intelligentsia to join the builders and the defenders of Israel.

How then can one account for the furor created by this latest reiteration of well-known sentiments? Ben Gurion's comments, on this occasion, evoked more than the expected protests from non-Zionist or anti-Zionist groups. The American Council for Judaism, of course, saw this as another assault upon the American citizenship of the Jew. The American Jewish Committee regarded this as a repudiation of its interpretation of the Ben Gurion-Blaustein statement. That much was familiar.

More important was the reaction of spokesmen for bodies safely in the Zionist fold. Despite its long-felt sympathies for Israel, the American Jewish Congress, through its president Joachim Prinz, issued a vigorous denunciatory statement. Rabbi Prinz shortly thereafter announced, "Zionism is—for all practical purposes—dead." Almost every element in the Zionist organization in the United States joined in the mounting wave of protest. The unanimity of the sentiment critical of Ben Gurion and the force with which it was expressed reveal that, for many American Jews, the issue bore a significance not evident at first sight.

To understand the reactions to Ben Gurion's statement it is necessary to consider both the situation in which it was made and that in which it was received.

Ben Gurion did not arrange to speak before the World Zionist Congress simply to make known his sentiments; he and his audience were by then fully acquainted with each other's views. His appearance and his speech were, in the first instance, tactical moves, but beyond that, they were also gestures with a ritual quality.

The Zionists were not eager to supply him with a platform and yielded only under pressure because they knew that he intended to continue his long struggle against the world organization. The government of Israel has for years regarded that body as an embarrassment. It does nothing, the Prime Minister thinks, that could not be better done by some branch of the Israeli government or by more comprehensive non-Zionist associations. It has therefore been no secret that Ben Gurion would like to see the Zionist Organization disband and hand its functions over to the State. On the other hand, the entrenched bureaucracy of the Organization, as well as many of its dedicated lay leaders, resist a change that would diminish the importance of their role both in Israel and in the Diaspora. Their capacity for resistance is sustained by institutional inertia, by sentiment, and by the credit they assume for the financial aid raised among American Jews.

In recent years it has become increasingly difficult to find the polite formulae for covering up the irreconcilable differences of attitude represented in this stalemate. On the eve of the twenty-fifth congress of the World Zionist Organization it seemed to some observers that this might be its last assembly. That danger was deflected by a prior understanding between Ben Gurion and Nahum Goldmann which extended its lease on life in return for an undertaking to make training for *aliyah* its central objective.

It was to drive home the meaning of that understanding that the Prime Minister spoke as he did. He has long been accustomed to belaboring the recalcitrant Zionists for their unwillingness to migrate. He has challenged Goldmann, for instance, to surrender the security of his American passport in order to throw in his lot with the State.

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No doubt, therefore, the members of Ben Gurion's audience had grown hardened to the taunt that they remained in "exile" out of fondness for its fleshpots. So much was but a familiar gambit in a familiar game.

Yet there was added to Ben Gurion's accusation an acerbity in the reference to the Orthodox that expressed the pent-up bitterness of his own frustrating situation. The events of the past year in Israel account for much of the passion with which he spoke.

Ben Gurion, of course, is by now accustomed to some kinds of failure. The total impasse in relationships with the Arab nations that has turned Israel into a garrison state has become a painful but accepted condition of existence. The inability to open channels through the Iron Curtain for the emigration of Eastern European Jews is beyond anyone's control. But setbacks within the country itself are doubly disappointing, for they bring with them self-doubt and self-reproach. Could they have been avoided?

During the course of 1960 the aging Prime Minister could see all too many evidences at home of that very lack of idealism and of the willingness to sacrifice for which he has berated the Zionists of the Diaspora. Ben Gurion has suffered through months of painful debate engendered by the failure to elect a new Chief Rabbi. The conflict endangered the precarious arrangement by which the religious parties participated in his government; and it raised unwelcome problems about the future relations of church and state in Israel. Through it all, the Orthodox Jews overseas were not in the least backward about making their views known in the matter.

Then, too, the exposures of the disastrous Lavon affair were just coming to a head. The resultant deterioration of the party situation that ultimately led to Ben Gurion's resignation was bad enough. But the incident also had more general, dismaying implications. It cast a sad light upon the nature of military-civilian relationships and upon the administration of justice in a democracy. It seemed to show that Ben Gurion's role had itself been ambiguous. And it threatened the careers of the young men of promise upon whom his greatest hopes of future leadership rested.

Again and again, the Old Man must have asked himself, what had happened to the creative idealism of the first years of the State's existence? Why were Israeli young people reluctant to embark upon a pioneering life in the Negev? Why did they prefer the transient mundane pleasures of the city and absorb themselves in selfish concern over the details of their own petty careers? No task was more important than that of reversing the trend. Indeed, highly-placed Israelis have privately expressed the hope that the Eichmann trial would remind Jews of the Nazi episode which was largely responsible for the creation of Israel and would rekindle the emotional reactions that brought tremendous support to the State in its infancy.

Under these conditions it is tempting to find a scapegoat in the outsiders, particularly if one is still dependent upon them. The Israelis know all too well the American tourist who burbles with enthusiasm over the gallantry of the *kibbutzim* while comfortably making inroads upon the pastries of the King David Hotel. Certainly there is resentment of those who think that they can earn the thrill of pride in the State's achievements without personal involvement other than by financial contributions. And it is easy to fall into the trap of supposing that it would all have been different had the Jews of the West come in their hundreds of thousands, bringing with them their skills and their capital. The reflected disappointments in Ben Gurion's jibes thus focused on the Zionists overseas, although the deeper cause of his own frustration may well be the discrepancy between his dreams and what has become of them.

BY THE SAME TOKEN, the cries of outrage which greeted the statement reflected both the tactical dilemma and the underlying frustration of the American Zionists. For more than a decade they have been searching for a reason for their being and for an ideology. The problems that could be left unresolved as long as the struggle for national existence was paramount came back to haunt them once the State was a reality and once the way was open to *aliyah*. They have no easy answer *as Zionists* to Ben Gurion's demand that they migrate. To justify their unwillingness to move or to send

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their children, they must argue that a sound Jewish life is indeed possible in the Diaspora —and that negates a fundamental tenet of earlier Zionist thought.

Above all, they are not themselves sure of where they stand; and they resent inquiries that reveal the ambiguities of their position. They, like other American Jews, continue to absorb the values of the middle-class society within which they find themselves. In the relative security of their own suburbs they are developing a style of life increasingly remote both from its European antecedents and from its Israeli counterparts. Comfortable as they are, however, they cannot evade two nagging questions.

They wonder, first of all, whether the institutions they have created here are adequate to assure the survival of the group in the face of the assimilative tendencies of American culture. Well-grounded or not, the suspicion that these may not be enough leads them to seek in Israel a counterweight that will compensate for their own suspected deficiencies.

And in regard to Israel, they would like to thrust aside the question of whether financial support, no matter how generous, is all that their Zionism demands of them. It is because Ben Gurion persists in raising the question they would rather not confront that they turn in rage against him.

From the start, the danger implicit in the relationship of the Jews of Israel to those of the United States has been the tendency of each group to use the other as a counter-image, to seek in the other the means of offsetting its own failings. The Prime Minister's comment touched this sensitive spot. Hence the outcry.

* * *

Milton Himmelfarb: In his speech to the World Zionist Congress in Jerusalem in December 1960, Prime Minister Ben Gurion said many things. Some aroused passionate resentment, especially in the United States. Yet the most interesting and problematic thing about that speech was what he did *not* say, might have been expected to say, and could have said with greater confidence now than a few years ago—that in the more or less near future many Jews, even outside the Soviet and the Arab spheres, will have to leave the countries in which they live and of which they are citizens.

Ben Gurion might have been expected to say this because a major purpose of his speech was to stimulate immigration to Israel and because by temperament and style he is a Zionist in Herzl's tradition. (Of all the founding fathers he invoked Herzl, Herzl's precursor Pinsker, and Weizmann.) The essential themes of Herzlian Zionism are that anti-Semitism is inevitable wherever Jews are in a minority and that a Jewish state is the only way out. Even Weizmann, who was cool to the mystique of statehood, was convinced that the Jews carried anti-Semitism in their luggage. Yet, aside from asking whether there can be any assurance that what happened to the Jews under Hitler in Europe cannot happen again somewhere else, and recalling the persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union and the Arab lands, Ben Gurion did not say that it would be necessary for Jews in other lands to leave. Instead, his speech was in the opposing tradition in Zionist thought, that of Ahad Ha'am. For Ahad Ha'am, Zionism and a Jewish center in Palestine were the answer not so much to the political and economic problems of the Jews as to the psychological and cultural problems of Judaism, or Jewishness.

It is this last purpose or function of Israel that Ben Gurion prefers to stress. In his speech Israel is primarily the place where Jews can live without a division in their souls, which straightens the backs not only of its citizens but also of Jews abroad, and from which alone can emanate a life-giving Jewish education and influence. We customarily think of Herzlian Zionism as hard and of Ahad Ha'am's Zionism as soft, but Ben Gurion's harsh, almost jeering portrait of Jewish life in emancipated countries is not Herzlian. Ahad Ha'am's famous essay on "Slavery in Freedom," about French Jewry seventy years ago, is harsher.

One could understand why Ben Gurion could want to adopt the Ahad Ha'am tone if the only Jews within the effective reach of his voice were those of the United States, or Canada, or England, or even perhaps

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France. He is one of the Israeli Zionists who concede what used to be called on the left the thesis of American exceptionalism—in Zionist terms, America's exemption from the workings of an iron law of anti-Semitism —and he may extend that to include some other Western countries as well. But there are almost 700,000 Jews in Latin America and more than 500,000 in Africa, including well over 100,000 in sub-Saharan Africa. For them a Herzlian diagnosis can no longer be dismissed out of hand as irrelevant ideologizing. The Jews of Africa and Latin America have reason to be fearful of the future. For many, the present is already intolerable.

THE LARGE MAJORITY of the Jews of Africa, more than 400,000, are in the Arab north, from Morocco in the west to Egypt in the east. Their difficulties are usually thought to have arisen from the conflict between Israel and the Arab states. That is true, but not wholly true; just as it is true but not wholly true that Arab coldness or hostility to the United States arises from the Arab-Israel conflict and the Arab view of the United States as a supporter of Israel. The United States is not especially popular even where there is no Arab emotion about Israel. Since the Indonesians, Guineans, Ghanaians, and Latin Americans are not much better disposed than the Arabs to the United States, it is unlikely that the United States would enjoy Arab respect and affection even if there were no Israel. It is similarly unlikely that the Jews in the Arab countries would be secure if there were no Israel. Their situation is not essentially different from that of the Jews in the rest of Africa or in Latin America.

Less than a year ago there were about 2,500 Jews in the Belgian Congo (mostly from Rhodes), and now there are practically none. Two years ago there were 11,000 in Cuba, and now it is said that the 20 per cent of the Jewish population who accounted for 50 per cent of the communal leadership and support have gone. If Castro remains in power, nearly all the remaining Jews will leave in the next few years, given the chance. Neither Nkrumah nor Castro is anti-Semitic or cares deeply one way or the other about the Arab-Israel conflict. It is simply that their kind of social and national revolution, or simply upheaval, squeezes out the Jews—incidentally, in passing, as a side-effect, but not less effectively than if the revolutionary program called for their expulsion.

Domestically, Nasserism and Fidelismo have in common something characteristic of the programs of all the modern-minded leaders of colonial, semi-colonial, and ex-colonial peoples: nationalization of the society, the state, and the economy. Nationalization is both a nationalist and plebeian matter, deposing "foreigners" and cosmopolitans from their positions of social and cultural leadership and bringing to the fore the "real" people. In Egypt, the revolution has penalized the effendis, the Gallicized or Anglicized upper class, and the Copts, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, and has promoted the Moslem peasantry and lower middle class, or their representatives; in Cuba, the urban bourgeoisie, those with an American orientation, and those who pride themselves on their Hispanidad, on the one hand, and the Afro-Cuban peasantry, on the other.

Nationalization also means suppressing communalism—the organization of philanthropy, education, and social life according to religion and national origin. Bourguiba in Tunisia, the most attractive leader of any of these movements, sees it as his prime duty to create a modern, secular, and unitary state. He is impatient with any significant institutions of a communal character that do not directly contribute to secular nationalism and to the consolidation of the state, whether Moslem institutions of the traditional sort or Jewish schools or charities. He means it sincerely when he says, "We are all Tunisians together," but there is a chilling impatience and compulsion about that slogan—not to mention the actual discriminations against Jews with which it seems to be compatible.

Economically, nationalization means both a transfer of strategic positions to the representatives of the "real" people and discouragement of the private sector and emphasis on the public sector. Between the two world wars, Poland and Lithuania were right-authoritarian and state-capitalist, and the anti-Jewish character of their economic policies was not tempered by any lack of anti-Semitism. The dominant trend in Africa

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and Latin America is left-authoritarian and semi-socialist and is not necessarily accompanied by anti-Semitism, but the ground is being removed from under the Jews all the same. The attraction of Fidelismo extends far beyond the borders of Cuba, and in greater or lesser measure most of the Latin American countries are susceptible to it. At the other end of Latin America there has been Perón, and though Perón is rightist and Castro leftist, they appeal basically to the same needs, emotions, and classes. Nor is anti-Semitism absent in some of those countries, to add to the objectively anti-Jewish effect of plebeian and nationalist revolution.

I keep remembering an impressive wartime application of Zionist analysis by Eliezer Livneh (then Liebenstein) in *Keneset Bialik,* an annual miscellany published in Tel Aviv in those years. It was a prediction of what awaited the surviving Jews in Eastern Europe after the war. Poland and its neighbors would be socialist, he said, but would have as little room for the Jews as in the bad old days. If Livneh's article were a Biblical text, it would be suspected of being prophecy after the event. Now, in 1961, no special boldness is needed for a prediction of Jewish emigration from Latin America in the years ahead.

In Tunisia, with a government that for that part of the world is very liberal, it is not only Jews who are in an uncomfortable position. Frenchmen are leaving too. In Algeria, the rebel authorities feel it necessary to give assurances that when independence is won, no part of the population will be discriminated against. They may honestly mean it, but can they deliver? During General de Gaulle's recent visit the Arab masses quickly turned "Algerian Algeria," the official rebel slogan, into "Moslem Algeria." As for Morocco, Israel accelerated and intensified the dangers now weighing on the Jews there, but it did not create them. If Tunisia is uncomfortable for the Jews and Morocco dangerous, that is because the Tunisia of Bourguiba is generally more liberal and humane than the Morocco of Mohammed V.

In the rest of the African continent, especially South Africa, the prospect for the Jews depends on the prospect for multiracial —i.e., multigroup—societies. The odds are poor. The American Negro Louis E. Lomax, in his recent *The Reluctant African,* records his dismay about the depth of nationalist-racist feelings among the African elite in countries still under white rule. Verwoerd's Afrikaner followers may feel that they have their backs to the sea, with no way out, but the British and the Jews in South Africa are of a different mind. Psychologically they already have their baggage packed for the time when they need to make a quick getaway.

WHY WAS Ben Gurion silent about all these things? To be sure, much of the new pressure for Jewish emigration does not arise from anti-Semitism, and the Herzlian tradition in Zionism stresses anti-Semitism. But that should present no great difficulty to a champion of Zionist thought. Classical Zionism, while emphasizing anti-Semitism, viewed it as a particular case of the more general phenomenon of national and group conflict; and the difficulties of the Jews in Africa and Latin America are certainly related to national and group conflict. Ben Gurion could easily have said that some of the specific features of classical Zionism are no longer applicable, but that its general principles are as valid as ever.

Many psychological explanations for Ben Gurion's silence suggest themselves, but they are flimsy. One may speculate, for instance, that once Ben Gurion had brought himself to admit that classical Zionism is outmoded, he could not go back on the admission. But Ben Gurion seems to be much more the sort of man who makes concessions grudgingly, awaiting the moment when he can abandon them as no longer necessary.

The probable explanations are political. A good part of Ben Gurion's speech was about the rise of the new states and the Israeli government's desire for their friendship. Israelis speak jestingly of their African empire—their specialists on technical missions to the new republics. The Israeli government assigns a high priority to courses, conferences, and training programs for Africans and Asians. It tries to be on the best possible terms with Latin American governments and opinion, for aid and comfort in the international political jungle. Ben Gurion was not going to say anything that would offend those people, and to say that

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the future was not promising for the Jews of Africa and Latin America might offend them.

On the Zionist side there was equally good reason for silence. Zionism offers both a diagnosis and a therapy. Africa and Latin America might be held to confirm the Zionist diagnosis, but would Jews accept the therapy? In recent years Jews who have had to emigrate have not characteristically gone to Israel, given a choice. There has even been a steady Jewish emigration from Israel. Of the substantial Jewish emigration from Algeria, nearly all has been to France; Algerian Jews are French citizens. Suppose Jews begin to emigrate from South Africa in large numbers. Are they likely to go to Israel when, as British subjects, they can go to England as of right? Latin American candidates for immigration to the United States are in a relatively favored position. That being so, will most Latin American Jewish emigrants go to Israel?

Hence, Ben Gurion must have thought, talk about immigration to Israel, by all means—but in Ahad Ha'am's language, not Herzl's. A moral-psychological appeal cannot compete very effectively with the automobile, job, and fine apartment that Ben Gurion admits are easier to get in other lands, but it is better than any other appeal he could make.

* * *

Charles E. Shulman: A single remark in an otherwise undistinguished address delivered by Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion has pointed up the sharp differences in outlook that now prevail among Jews in Israel and those living in lands outside Israel. Ironically, the remark was only an esoteric quotation from the Talmud: "Whosoever lives outside the land of Israel is considered to have no God." There are many statements in the Talmud which clearly contradict this quotation, and in the context of Ben Gurion's lengthy discussion, it appears as a relatively harmless and insignificant sentence. But it took on unusual importance for Jews living abroad not only because it was featured in the press, but also because it seemed to climax a long series of denigrations of Jewish Diaspora life. Ben Gurion happens to be the most articulate among those who believe that the Diaspora Jew is doomed to assimilation and oblivion. (But in this, as in many other views which he expresses publicly, he represents Israeli public opinion.) When Ben Gurion spoke at Brandeis University, the first Jewish-sponsored institution of general learning in the modern world, his review of Jewish history had no praise for the Jewish experience during the past two thousand years of the Diaspora:

> When we went into exile, we continued to live, in our hearts and minds, within the bounds of our biblical heritage; but we did not continue to create anew save for the multiplying of the making of interpretations and interpretations of interpretations about our sacred writings. Our spiritual lives, like our material lives, were impoverished and shrivelled. And if at the commencement of the modern Renaissance period in the seventeenth century a great eagle—Baruch Spinoza—rose from our midst, and in his lofty thought ascended to the skies, he was cast out of our nest and shed his light on others, uttering his profound words in another tongue. We lived in a political, an economic, and also a spiritual ghetto. This was not because our creative power was atrophied—had this been so it is doubtful if we could have maintained our identity—but because we had been torn from the roots of our people's vitality, from homeland and independence.

It could hardly have been flattering to Brandeis University to hear this distinguished recipient of its honorary degree declare before a convocation which included a national television audience that during the past two thousand years Diaspora Jewry produced but one great personality—Spinoza—and nothing of lasting spiritual value. His estimate of the Jewish future in the Diaspora is not much higher. In an address before the Hadassah convention in Jerusalem he told a large assembly of American delegates:

> Never was such a great Jewish community in danger of gentle extinction as American Jewry today. If this great historic miracle had not taken place in our lifetime and the State of Israel had not risen, the majority of the Jews in the

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United States would have been left without any bonds to Judaism.

The total emphasis of Israelis on the concepts of what Ben Gurion calls *halutziut*—the spirit of pioneering in the land of Israel—and on its by-product *aliyah*—immigration to Israel by Jews now living in the Diaspora lands—as the instruments of Jewish survival in the modern world, has tended to cloud the relationship of Israelis with Jews abroad. And the failure to take into account the temper of the Diaspora mind has resulted in a psychological gulf between those Jews within and those outside Israel's borders which has been widening ever since the establishment of the State thirteen years ago. Evidence of this fact may be seen in the adverse reactions in America to Ben Gurion's latest comments among Jews of every shade of opinion, from Zionist supporters of Israel to the anti-Zionist members of the Council for Judaism. Most of the protests indicated resentment, and not a few, like the following editorial comment, revealed the great frustration of Diaspora Jews:

> We think Mr. Ben Gurion's posture is symptomatic of the unfortunate attitude of the Israeli community toward American and world Jewry. We hear constantly reiterated pleas from American leaders for understanding on the part of American and other Jewries for the aspirations, needs, uniqueness of the people of Israel. Our observation is that this already exists—on a high and splendid level. The appeal should be addressed in the opposite direction; for an understanding and appreciation on the part of Israelis of the role, the function, the very relationship of American and world Jewry both to Israel and to its own variegated history.

Necessary as it is for Diaspora Jews to realize this spiritual position of Israel in today's total world Jewish complex, it is no less important for Israel to understand the Diaspora Jewish mind. For though the Diaspora Jew created Israel and now supports Israel far beyond his fund-raising efforts, he is at the same time not inclined to uproot himself. Nor will he accept *aliyah* as an indispensable condition of his spiritual fulfillment.

EIGHTY years ago two waves of immigration proceeded out of Europe. One was the great exodus which brought two million Jews to American shores in the decades preceding the First World War. The second, much smaller wave consisted of Jews who went to Palestine to lay the foundations of the State of Israel. These latter settled among the Arabs and suffered hardships and privations while they worked at draining the malarial swamps, establishing the kibbutzim, and organizing the unique Histadrut labor movement. Many of them (who followed earlier religious settlers) embraced socialism in place of the Jewish religion they abandoned. They had dedicated themselves to a single cause—the creation of a free and independent homeland for the Jewish people. For they firmly believed that there was no future for the Jew in the Diaspora. Their cure for all Jewish ills was geographical.

In pursuit of their program they established *hachsharah,* or "preparation," camps in Diaspora countries to recruit Jewish youth for settlement in Palestine, creating conditions in these camps similar to those the trainees would find in their new home. The prospective young settlers sang the songs of the Palestinian Jews, studied Hebrew, and absorbed the socialist philosophy prevailing among those with whom they were to share their lives. (It was their children who later formed the core of the Haganah armies that were to win freedom for the Jews in the land of Israel.)

Meanwhile, the Jews who came to the United States were also aware of the insecurities of European Diaspora life. Anti-Semitism had motivated their leave-taking from Europe, just as it did for those who went to Palestine. Yet though many of them found integration into American life hard, they looked upon America as a permanent home. They were sympathetic to the Herzlian program for the establishment of a Jewish homeland, and maintained a lively interest in the progress of the Zionist movement. Some of their children even enrolled in the *hachsharah* camps and prepared to settle in Palestine. They attended the mass rallies addressed by Zionist leaders from abroad. But for all their interest and sympathy, they never adopted the view of the Palestine Jewish community (the

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Yishuv) that the Diaspora was only a way station on the road to permanent life in the land of their fathers.

The difference in outlook between these two communities inevitably grew wider as time passed. To the Yishuv, the Jewish homeland and the Jewish people could not be separated. To American Jews, the separation was both possible and necessary. Always aware of a world Jewish problem, these Diaspora Jews certainly continued to support the Zionist movement, but going to Palestine was for others, who needed it. Justice Brandeis stated this viewpoint eloquently in an address called "The Jewish Problem and How to Solve It":

> Let us clearly bear in mind what Zionism is, or rather, what Zionism is not. It is not a movement to remove all the Jews of the world compulsorily to Palestine. It is essentially a movement to give the Jews more, not less freedom; it is to enable the Jews to exercise the same right now exercised by practically every other people in the world; to live at their option either in the land of their fathers or in some other country. . . . Indeed, loyalty to America demands that each American Jew become a Zionist. For only through the ennobling effect of its strivings can we develop the best that is in us and give to this country the full benefit of our great inheritance.

American Jews were shocked and saddened by the Jewish tragedy in Europe, they protested against British immigration policies in Palestine, and they were proud of the outnumbered and underequipped Haganah forces which fought the battles for Israel's freedom. Still there was no question in the minds of American Jews regarding their option. Like Justice Brandeis, they saw no inconsistency in multiple loyalties and looked on the Zionist Organization as a bridge between the Diaspora and the Jewish homeland—as indeed it was. But as time went on, their personal attachment to the concept of peoplehood grew weaker. They were appalled by Nazi atrocities, but they could not respond like the Palestine Jewish community. In those years, it was to Palestine that the great body of Jewish refugees streamed. American Jews began to contribute more and more of their means, and less and less of themselves, through the United Jewish Appeal and similar philanthropic organizations. Zionism as a personal attachment to the fate and destiny of the Jewish people was on the wane in America long before the establishment of the State of Israel.

THE present conflict represented by the response to Ben Gurion's comment, then, is but an extension of a continuing difference of emphasis that was overlooked in years past. The American-born Jew gradually lost the vision of the peoplehood of Israel. He came to regard religion as the only special bond that tied him to other Jews, sharing as he did with his Christian neighbors the language, culture, and customs of the country. As for the sabra, so far did he become alienated from Diaspora Jewish life that the alarmed Israeli ministry of education instituted "Jewish consciousness" courses in the schools to give the young Israelis a sense of continuity with the Jewish past and a sense of unity with Jews living abroad. Dr. Mordecai Kaplan has given us a clear picture of the difficulties which ensue when bonds that once tied the Jewish communities of the world together are dissolved.

> There was a Jewish people during the centuries that Jews lived in forced dispersion. The almost unbroken uniformity of belief and practice that obtained in the past made possible indivisible unity. We did not need our enemies to unify us —without our consent. Came the emancipation and enlightenment and wrought havoc with the unity of the Jewish people. Emancipation has led to the integration of Jews with the body politic of the nations of which they are citizens. As a result, each local aggregate of Jews develops its own communal characteristics that render it incommunicable with every other geographic Jewish community.

The result of the present crisis in Israeli-Diaspora relations may be more injurious to Israel's future than is now realized by those guiding the destiny of the Jewish State. For, without the ideological purpose once supplied by Zionism, the Diaspora approach to Israel may be limited to fund-raising and the like. Immediately before the rise of the State of Israel huge numbers joined the Zionist movement in America. But the new recruits were not committed to the Zionist philosophy; they

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joined to protest British measures against helpless Jews seeking entry into Palestine. The main concern of these Zionists was to find a home for the homeless Jews. Then, after the State of Israel was established, the Zionist ranks dwindled rapidly and American Jews chose different means of manifesting their interest in Israel. They continued to contribute generously to the United Jewish Appeal, and supported a host of activities devoted to the development of the economic, cultural, and social life of the new country.

The gradual change of emphasis did not escape the Israelis who began to recognize in American Jewish philanthropic endeavors for Israel the marks of an ideologically distinct community. This recognition can perhaps explain Ben Gurion's denigration of the Diaspora mind, but it cannot explain his seeming indifference to the problem of dealing with it, or explain his rejection of the World Zionist Organization —the only agency composed of interested Diaspora Jews from all countries which offers any channels of communication between the two communities and is capable of restoring to Diaspora Jewish thinking the temporarily lost concept of the unity of the Jewish people. The resolutions of the recent congress of the World Zionist Organization carry little weight, since their fulfillment depends upon people who now consider themselves at home in their Diaspora environment and have no desire to settle in Israel. Because the Israelis have not yet penetrated to the thinking of the Diaspora mind it remains doubtful whether the Diaspora youth can be prevailed upon to spend even a limited number of years in Israel.

ISRAELIS should consider the possibility that the elimination of the World Zionist bodies might isolate them still further from the Diaspora which they hardly know. Their notion of Jewish life in western democratic countries probably derives from the tourists who visit Israel, and tourists are not necessarily the bearers of the best in Jewish culture. As for the masses of settlers from other lands, practically every group which has come to live in Israel during the past quarter of a century has consisted of refugees bearing the mark of suffering. They have been survivors of death camps, impoverished and sick immigrants from Arab countries, and people violently uprooted from lands of their birth. Thus, the Israelis may not be aware of a Diaspora Jewish life that is normal, creative, and satisfying. Perhaps, because of the kind of Orthodoxy they have seen in Israel, they cannot conceive of a religion which can be a unifying force in Jewish life. They may, therefore, be unable to comprehend why a stray Talmudic quotation equating godliness with residence in Israel (even though it was intended solely for Orthodox Jews abroad, as Ben Gurion explained later) should arouse such widespread resentment among members of all shades of Jewish belief in the Diaspora—who could interpret it as an appeal to tribalism and nothing more. Jewish religious thinking in the Diaspora has long been concerned with the problem of unity. Mordecai M. Kaplan, for one, has observed that we cannot rely on anti-Semitism to maintain the unity of Jews in Israel with the Jews in the Diaspora, and that without a unifying purpose which only mature religion can provide, Jews in the Diaspora are likely to lose interest in the Jews of Israel, even as Israelis have already begun to lose interest in the Diaspora. (Indeed, Israelis today are no more interested in the religion of the American Jews as a unifying element than American Jews are interested in the Israeli concept of peoplehood.)

There is much in Diaspora Jewish life that calls for realistic reappraisal today. But there is nothing in it to warrant the belief that (in the free world at least) it is far on the road to extinction. Its roots, as the late Simon Rawidowitz pointed out in his posthumously published book *Babylon and Jerusalem,* are sunk deep in contemporary civilization. Rawidowitz opposed the tendency in Israel to elevate the heroic and state-building element in the Jewish tradition above the traditional spirit of the Diaspora, which kept the Jewish people alive throughout the centuries when it was without a homeland. Today Jerusalem and Babylon—Dr. Rawidowitz's symbols for Israel and the Diaspora—are equal components of the whole of Jewish life. The Diaspora has known golden ages of Jewish culture before and may know such ages again.

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PAUL GOODMAN

PORNOGRAPHY, ART & CENSORSHIP

PRESENT THINKING about obscenity and pornography is wrongheaded and damaging. In order to protect vital liberties, the higher, more intellectual courts often stand out against the police, the postmasters, and popular prejudice; yet since they don't give the right reasons, the issues are never settled. And worse, the courts lend themselves to the sexual attitude which, at this moment in our history, creates the very "hard-core" pornography that is objected to. That is, the court corrupts, it helps the censors corrupt. It ought to give light and provide leadership, and instead it stands in the way of progress. And worst of all, finally, by misunderstanding the nature of art and speech, the court emasculates them and prevents them from playing their indispensable social role. These are harsh words. Many of the readers of this magazine are going to be offended by this essay: they won't like my statement of the problem and they will think my remedies are worse than the disease. Nevertheless let us reason about it.

We are faced with the dilemmas of a society in transition. In discussing censorship, it is impossible to make good sense and good law without sociological and psychological analysis; rehashing the statutes will not do. But it is no secret that in this field earnest authorities angrily clash on the most material issues (this is a sign of transition). Take the most undoubted sadistic pornography, socially worthless and sold at a criminal profit: one psychologist will say that its effects are disastrous, it causes "sex crimes" and juvenile delinquency; yet another psychologist will flatly assert that no such connection has ever been proved, there is no clear and present danger to warrant legal action. Now in this particular difficulty, the courts seem to have a convenient out: since admittedly the dubious object has no social merit, since its associations are unsavory and the purveyor is a racketeer, why shouldn't the court go along with the censorship? No real freedom is impugned. But here is a dilemma: *what if the censorship itself, part of a general repressive anti-sexuality, causes the evil, creates the need for sadistic pornography sold at a criminal profit?* The tone of the censorship—*and* of the usual court decisions—is vindictive and anxious; it is not the tone of a simple prudential choice in terms of broad social policy. The censoring is a dynamic and emotional act, with novel and perhaps unthought-of effects. The social question is not the freedom of a venal purveyor, though the case is always argued in his terms since he is the one brought to court; the question is whether the sexual climate of the community is being perverted by the censorship.

The censorship justifies itself as protec-

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tion of children and adolescents. But consider this issue in terms of an accepted commonplace of contemporary pedagogy, that we must provide the child a "structured permissiveness" to grow in: permissiveness so that he can act without fear, shame, and resentment, and learn by his mistakes; and a structure of firm *parental* morals and culture, how "we" behave, with which he can identify when he needs security and guidance in his anxiety and confusion. A good parent rarely sees a clear and present danger (of the sort of being hit by a car or swallowing poison). Most dubious associations and behaviors of a child outgrow themselves in his ongoing career in a moral and cultural environment. And indeed, this ongoing career is the only real solution for him; whereas a "protective" parental attitude will almost surely communicate the parents' anxieties and complicate things further.

If this is a correct analysis, then the recent "liberal" decision on *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is inadequate. It is not permissive in the right way and it does not provide a firm moral and cultural support. I am urging the court to re-examine its own anxieties and ask if the pornographic is in fact, in our times, obscene.

I

Judge Bryan's exoneration of *Lady Chatterley* takes its doctrine from Woolsey on *Ulysses* (1933) and Brennan in *Roth vs. United States* (1957). Let us consider these in turn.

Judge Woolsey's method in clearing *Ulysses* is as follows: he defines the obscene as the pornographic, as "tending to stir the sex impulses or to lead to sexually impure and lustful thoughts," and he proceeds to show that the book does neither but "is a sincere and serious attempt to devise a new literary method for the observation and description of mankind." Let us postpone the literary criticism till the next section, but here stop short at the definition of obscenity.

The notion that sexual impulse or stirring sexual impulse is a bad thing comes from an emotional climate in which it was generally agreed that it would be better if sexuality did not overtly exist, when people bathed and slept fully clothed, and a bull was called a he-cow. Then anything which was sexual in public, as by publication of "detailed representation in words or pictures," violated society's self-image and was certainly obscene. In our times such a notion cannot define obscenity. The pornographic is not *ipso facto* the obscene. As Judge Jerome Frank pointed out in 1949, "No sane man thinks that the arousing of normal sexual desires is socially dangerous." We live in a culture where all High Thought insists on the beauty and indeed hygienic indispensability of sexual desires, and where a vast part of commerce is busy in their stimulation. Nevertheless, Judge Bryan on *Chatterley* repeats the doctrine in 1960! This leaves us in utter confusion. For consider: Bryan goes on to define the "prurient . . . that is to say, shameful or morbid interest in sex"; but, if the stirring of desire is defined, and therefore treated, as obscene, how can a normal person's interest in sex be anything else *but* shameful? This is what shame is, the blush at finding one's impulse to be unacceptable. Only a brazen person would not be ashamed. So the court corrupts. It is a miserable social policy. I would rather have Lawrence condemned than defended by such reasoning.

But it is Woolsey's second clause, "leading to lustful thoughts," that is the more interesting, for this is the likely and immediate effect of literary or pictorial stimulation. Bluntly, "lustful thoughts" means incitement to masturbate; and I guess that in the overwhelming majority of cases this is the chief use of pornography. Let us again look to history. In the 19th century, all sexual facts were suspect, but masturbation was a mortal sin and the prelude to insanity. Let me quote from a great, good-humored, and liberal man, the prince of the Enlightenment: "Nothing weakens

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the mind as well as the body so much as the kind of lust directed toward oneself. It is entirely at variance with the nature of man. We must place it before the youth in all its horribleness," etc., etc. (Immanuel Kant, *On Education*). Contrast with this a philosopher of our own day: "Left to itself, infantile masturbation has, apparently, no bad effect upon health and no discoverable bad effect upon character; the bad effects which have been observed in both respects are, it seems, wholly attributable to attempts to stop it" (Bertrand Russell, *Education and the Good Life*). But this is pretty nearly the identical opinion of Benjamin Spock, M.D., in his pocket book of *Child Care* which is, I suppose, in every middle-class home in America (more than 12,000,000 copies of the paperback have been sold). And since the connection between pornography and juvenile delinquency is much touted, let me quote the identical opinion of a revered criminologist: "Masturbation is a habit without deleterious effects in itself, yet a source of behavior difficulties because of strong social disapproval" (Donald Taft).*

My point is not that the habit is good; it is morally otiose. But when the court says that stirring to masturbate is obscene, certainly the court corrupts. It is claimed that the court must judge according to public sentiment; but there is plenty of better public sentiment. Why must the police and the courts follow the worst part of the population instead of leading with the best? A more enlightened court would not solve these problems any more than it has created integration in the South; but, by the same example, a good decision is not irrelevant.

THIS BRINGS us to the doctrine of *Roth vs. United States*. The standards to be applied in determining obscenity, Bryan quotes Judge Brennan, are "whether to the average person, applying contemporary standards, the dominant theme of the material taken as a whole appeals to prurient interest." Part of this sentence, "the dominant theme taken as a whole," is used by Bryan to prove that *Lady Chatterley* is a "serious" work, following the tactics of Woolsey, and again let us defer the literary criticism. Here let us stop at "applying contemporary standards," which is an attempt on the part of the court to cope with the changes in emotional climate that we have just been discussing. As Judge Bryan puts it, "Much of what is now accepted would have shocked the community to the core a generation ago." I don't think that this is a sufficient account. What is the history?

As one reviews the many cases in James Kilpatrick's *The Smut Peddlers*† (which, despite its outrageous title and a vulgar first chapter, has many good pages), one is struck by how, year after year, this theme of changing standards recurs in the decisions: "What was regarded as indecent in the days of the Floradora Sextette, is decent in the days of the fan dance." But what is most striking is that in the long chain of decisions over two generations, the standard becomes increasingly broader, in almost every respect: the bathing suits more scanty, the four-letter words more tolerable, the descriptions of the sexual act more realistic, the "unnatural" themes more mentionable. It is just this tendency through time that the courts fail to take into account as they judge each case. Therefore they are always behind, they miss the essential nature of the phenomena they are judging, and this has consequences.

The fact is that our generations are living through a general breakdown of repressive defenses, increasingly accelerating; and therefore a deepening social

* Let me spell out the damage. According to sexologists the dangers in this act come from (a) inhibited performance, (b) guilt and shame of the act, (c) guilt about accompanying images. Our public policy obviously enhances the first two conditions, but it is also importantly responsible for the guilt-inducing images, for it associates lust with punishment and degradation and so creates sado-masochistic thoughts.

† Doubleday, 312 pp., $3.95.

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neurosis. Freud's doctrine, let us remember, is that it is not repression (total amnesia) that causes neurosis, but the failure of repression, so that repressed contents return in distorted guise. The process is irreversible; our culture has experienced too much of it to ban it, or frighten it, out of mind. Therefore the only recourse is to try to get, as methodically and safely as possible, to the end of it, so that the drives can reappear as themselves and come to their own equilibrium. This involves undoing the repressive attitude itself. It is just in this that our high courts, like the Lords in England, could be excellent social counselors. With expert advisors they could try to forecast, and guide toward, a sane sexual policy. Instead, they cling to an outmoded concept of obscenity and they prevent outmoded statutes from becoming dead letters. At the same time, they are forced to cede to changing public taste and relax standards. Now this must lead to social chaos, as we are witnessing with the pornography, for so long as the attempted repressing continues, the repressed contents must continually emerge in more and more distorted form. And of course we also get legal chaos, as the court twists and turns to avoid the outmoded statutes.

For a writer like myself, there is a bitter irony in Bryan's statement that the previously shocking is now acceptable. Yes it is —because Flaubert, Ibsen, and Wedekind, and Dreiser, O'Neill, and Joyce paid their pound of flesh to the censor. They opened the ever new sensibility and were punished for it. Probably this is inevitable, and any advance worth having is worth suffering for; but it is a bitter proceeding. And now *Lady Chatterley* is accepted as a "community" art-work just when it has ceased to be a living art-work. Lawrence has explicitly told us that he wrote it "in defiance of convention"; that defiance, and its awkward rusticity, were its life. Now we are left merely with a rather neurotic fantasy of a frigid woman and a class-resentful "dominating" man. The court's lagging acceptance of bygone classics for the wrong reasons makes it difficult for a living classic to be accepted and exert an influence in the living community.

In the breakdown of repression, the artists do their part by first dreaming the forbidden thoughts, assuming the forbidden stances, and struggling to make sense. They cannot do otherwise, for they bring the social conflicts in their souls to public expression. But the court does not do its duty; and the critics (I will mention no names) go along with the court's convenience and lie and lie.

What is the court's duty as I see it? To set aside the definition of pornography as obscenity—just as it set aside the doctrine of equal but separate facilities—and to clarify and further the best tendency of the sexual revolution. To call *not* obscene whatever tends to joy, love, and liveliness, including the stirring of lustful impulses and thoughts. I shall argue at the end of this paper that such a policy would tend to diminish pornography—make it not a big deal.

As it is, for well-known historical reasons, we live in a stimulating, unsatisfying society midway in transition; and while the liberal court hedges in embarrassment and the critics lie, the police and the administrators lurk to get convictions on any grounds. The police make wholesale raids for girlie magazines, they entrap a harmless old man for his lustful habit, the postmaster bars Lawrence from the mails, and the Drug Administrator burns the books of Wilhelm Reich as "labels" for a contraband commodity. To restore order, there has to be a wiser policy.

II

LET ME PROCEED to a philosophical question raised by these decisions, which is, in my opinion, even more important for our society than the sexual matter: what is the nature of speech and art? To protect their "serious" books, the courts attempt to distinguish speech as communication of an idea or even as talk-

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ing *about* a subject, from speech as an action doing something to its speaker, subject, and hearer. This is the tactic of Woolsey when he devotes most of his opinion to Joyce's "new method for the observation and description of mankind" and of Bryan when he says that the plot of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* "serves as a vehicle through which Lawrence develops his basic . . . philosophy. Most of the characters are prototypes." The judges reason that if something like this can be established, a book can be protected under the Bill of Rights guarantee of freedom to communicate opinion. Yet, although this is a useful distinction for some kinds of speech—e.g. scientific reporting and conscientious journalism—it simply does not apply to common speech, and it is necessarily irrelevant to art, for one essential function of art is to move the audience. If Joyce and Lawrence felt that all they had done was to convey ideas, they would have considered themselves failures.

(Naturally the decisions themselves, based on an unphilosophical distinction, have been notoriously inconsistent. For example, *The Well of Loneliness* was banned because "it seeks to justify the right of a pervert . . . it does not argue for repression of insidious impulses . . . it seeks to justify and idealize perverted ideas." Yet these are merely the ideas of the author. But contrariwise, Justice Stewart defended the film of *Lady Chatterley* by saying, "The picture advocates an idea—that adultery under certain circumstances may be proper behavior. The First Amendment guarantee is freedom to advocate ideas." Jerome Frank has wryly commented that if an "idea" is eloquently argued, it is in danger; if it is dully argued, it is safe.)

Here is an example of the legal doctrine at work. At the Marble Arch in London, crowds gather to listen to popular orators vent their grievances and longings on every topic under the sun, freedom for Nigeria, a subscription for the Irish Revolutionary Army, the ethics of deceiving one's wife, the nearest way to salvation. Like Bernard Shaw, the orators test their repartee against a powerfully insolent audience. All is strictly legal. But if a man comes within twenty-four inches of the speaker, he is at once hauled off by a guardian bobby! A man can say anything, but he mustn't do anything; he can listen to anything, but he mustn't let himself be aroused. Freedom of speech means freedom to talk about. Speech is not saying-as-an-action. The limitations are clear. If there would be incitement to riot, the freedom would cease. "Fighting words" are forbidden because they lead to fights. Pornography is forbidden because it is in the nature of detailed sexual reporting that it leads to physiological reactions and likely acts. Blasphemy and obscenity are forbidden because they are acts as such, they break a taboo in their very utterance, as well as presumably undamming what is held in repression by the taboo. Also, there are even particular topics, like the subject of *Lolita,* where merely to treat them at all in some public way is tantamount to sanctioning their existence in the universe. Here speech becomes magic, to name the Name creates the thing.

JEFFERSON and other revolutionaries who insisted on the Bill of Rights probably had a more risky notion of freedom of speech than our courts, as they did of political action in general. But if to them freedom of speech meant merely freedom to communicate opinions, they could not have intended the First Amendment to apply to belles-lettres at all, for the neoclassical aesthetic doctrine of their time held that the function of art was to move and instruct, to instruct by moving. In our modern aesthetics the legal embarrassment is even worse; we pay less attention to imitating reality and lay all the more emphasis on speech as action. To Freud, the art-act alleviates a repressed conflict by daring to express and publish it (this is Lawrence's "defying convention"). In advance-guard art, where the artist is reacting to and

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vomiting up something intolerable in society, the art-act cannot help being offensive. Since the 19th century, the naturalists have meant to defy and shame when they stripped away the mask of hypocrisy. The primary aim of Dada is to shock. In his *Theater of Violence,* Antonin Artaud declares that theater is precisely not communicating ideas but acting on the community, and he praises the Balinese village dance that works on dancers and audience till they fall down in a trance. (For that matter, the shrieking and wailing that was the specialty of Greek tragedy would among us cause a breach of the peace. The nearest we come are adolescent jazz sessions that create a public nuisance.) The "poetry readings" of the Beats try to give us their "existent situation," usually drunken, and the audience copes with it as best it can. I could continue a long list.

To these facts of modern art, the doctrine of Woolsey, Brennan, and van Pelt Bryan is not adequate. Such art cannot be defended as communicating ideas, and anything objectionable in it (there is much) must condemn it. Indeed, the arguments of the censoring customs officer or postmaster betoken a more genuine art-response, for they have been directly moved, although in an ignorant way, by the excitement and inner conflict of Joyce and Lawrence. Their experience is ignorant and low-grade because they are unwilling to let the sexual excitement belong to a larger world, and this is why they excerpt passages. But at least they have been made to feel that the world is threateningly sexual. As the British Magistrate Mead said, on paintings by Lawrence, "Art is immaterial. . . . Obscene pictures should be put an end to like any wild animal which may be dangerous." And so Justice Manton, in his dissent on *Ulysses,* "Obscenity is not rendered less by the statement of truthful fact," for it is precisely the fact, the nature of things, that is obscene to the censor.

Woolsey's doctrine is insulting to the artist. He says that the book did "not tend to excite lustful thoughts, *but* the net effect was a tragic and powerful commentary" (italics mine). Surely the author wants to say, "It is lustful among other things, and *therefore* its net effect is tragic."

In our culture an artist is expected to move the reader; he is supposed to move him to tears, to laughter, to indignation, to compassion, even to hatred; but he may not move him to have an erection or to mockery of public figures making a spectacle of themselves. Why not? By these restrictions we doom ourselves to a passionless and conformist community. Instead of bracketing off the "classics," as especially the British courts do—indeed, the legal definition of a classic seems to be a "non-actionable obscenity"—let us pay attention to the classical pornography and we shall see that it is not the case, as the court feels obliged to prove, that a work has a "net" social use despite its sexual effect, but rather that the pornography, in a great context and spoken by a great soul, *is* the social use. Aristophanic comedy was still close to a seasonal ritual to encourage rebelliousness and lead to procreation. Rabelais is disgraceful like a giant baby, and this *is* the Renaissance. Catullus teaches us the callous innocence of high-born youth, free of timidity and pettiness; and Tom Jones is a similar type, with a dash of English sentimentality. If we may believe their preludes, both the *Arabian Nights* and the *Decameron* are cries of life in the face of death; and in our times Jean Genet, one of our few fine writers, is pornographic and psychopathic because only so, he tells us, can he feel that he exists in our inhuman world. But apart from these lofty uses, there are also famous pornographic books made just for fun, since sex is a jolly subject.

To explore the nature of speech as action, consider the other forbidden topic, the mockery of sacred public figures. In our country we suffer from a gentleman's

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agreement that is politically and artistically disastrous. For instance, our recent President could not frame an English sentence, and according to some observers his career as the head of a great university was dismally hilarious. "Dwight Eisenhower at Columbia" is a title to rouse an Aristophanes. In the 18th century Ike would have been richly mauled. But our satirists on stage and TV avoid such subjects. Then there cannot be great comedy, for if you dare not mock the pink elephant looming in the foreground, you can't mock anything. Instead, our satire consists of isolated gags that do not add up to an explosion. But satire is an essential of democracy, for how can we expect our leaders to be anything but front-figures if they do not take any personal risk and cannot be stung?

The court is not philosophical. It does not see that lively speech is active speech. Sexual action is a proper action of art. The question is not *whether* pornography, but the quality of the pornography. To sting powerful figures into a personal engagement is a proper action of art, otherwise we sink in a faceless swamp. What the more intellectual court does do is to protect exceptional cases against vulgar prejudices and police busy-work. (But often, as in the astounding case of the revocation of Bertrand Russell's appointment at New York's City College, the matter never gets to a better court.) This is not enough to improve the cultural climate. In principle, the living writers are not exceptional and famous cases. Rather, it works out as follows: publishers will not publish what will get them into trouble; authors cease to write what will not be published, or what the editor censors the heart out of; soon the public has lost its authors at their best, and the authors have lost the common touch. The actual situation is that there is little that is published, and perhaps not much that is written, that does or would get into trouble with the censorship, except precisely the hard-core pornography. Why is there so little? If the publishers and authors were doing their duty, the courts would be battlegrounds. Instead, the void is soon filled with safe entertainers, gag-men, sensation-mongers, pap-journalists. Advertising is the chief public art. The community is starved of ideas.

III

IT HAS BECOME THE fashion to say that the aesthetic and libertarian matters we have been discussing have no relation to the actual police problem of hard-core pornography; let the police be careful not to encroach on serious writers, and let the writers leave the police to their raids and entrapment. This schizophrenic theory is false. We are one community, and the kind of high culture we have and the kind of low culture we have are opposite faces of the same lead quarter. But let us look at the hard-core pornography in itself:*

I have been arguing in this essay that not only is there innocent and useful pornography that ought not to be censored, but the method of censorship helps create the very kind of harmful pornography that we should like to see checked. The case is similar—and not causally unrelated—to the social creation of juvenile delinquency by social efforts to control it. When excellent human power is inhibited and condemned, it will reappear ugly and dangerous. The censorious attitude toward

* Most simply, we must bear in mind the remark of William Sloane of Rutgers, cited by James Kilpatrick: "I am unimpressed with the record of repressive legislation in this country. The laws against narcotics, for example, are supporting a large criminal class and leading to large-scale corruption of our youth. The laws against off-track betting are supporting a large criminal class and lead directly to police corruption. No set of laws will prevent the bootlegging of pornography." But they *will* make it profitable. When J. Edgar Hoover favors us with his periodic philippics about the frighteningly increasing rate of crime, flood of pornography, theft of autos, etc., and asks for more teeth in the laws and more money for enforcement, surely he proves too much. There is the possibility that his methods, since they do not work, might be the wrong methods.

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the magazines and pictures is part of the general censorious attitude that hampers ordinary sexuality and thereby heightens the need for satisfaction by means of the magazines and pictures. It is said that the pornography artificially stimulates, and no doubt this is true (though there is no evidence that there can be such a thing as "too much" sex), but it is not so importantly true as that the pornography is indulged in because of a prior imbalance of excessive stimulation and inadequate discharge. Given such an imbalance, if the pornography heightens satisfaction, as it probably does in many cases, it is insofar therapeutic. This is an unpleasant picture of our country, but there is no help for it except to remedy anti-sexuality. I have argued that the revolution is irreversible, and the attempt to re-establish total amnesia must lead to more virulent expressions, e.g. still less desirable pornography.

Let us consider two aspects of poor pornography, its *mere* sexuality or "lust," devoid of any further human contact, drama, or meaning; and its very frequent sado-masochism.

The experience of mere "lust" in isolation is a neurotic artifact. Normally, affection increases lust and pleasure leads to gratitude and affection. The type neurotic case is the sailor ashore, who seeks out a "pig" and works very hard *not* to get emotionally involved. Why should he behave so strangely? Let me suggest an explanation. His promiscuity is approved by his peers but, more deeply and morally, it is disapproved by himself. If he regarded the woman as a person, he would feel guilty and hate her, and sometimes he manifests this as brutal violence, really meant for himself. More decently, he restricts his experience to bare lust, though this is not much of a *sexual* experience. I choose the example because it is a fair analogy of the attitude of a large population in America, not unknown in middle-class suburbs. We accept the naturalness of sexuality in an abstract and permissive way, but we have by no means come to terms with its moral, family, and pedagogic dilemmas during a hard period of transition. There then occurs an isolated "sexuality" which at its best is hygienic and at its worst is mate-swapping, disowning the sexuality of those we love. Finally, I would suggest that this is the style of much of what the court elegantly calls "dirt for dirt's sake," the sexually stimulating without dramatic, plastic, or other artistic value. Necessarily this must be limited to a few stereotyped anecdotes and a few naked poses; and it must soon become boring.

The sado-masochistic pornography, however, that combines lust and punishment, torture, or humiliation, is the darker effect of a more restrictive and guilty-making training, for example certain kinds of religious upbringing. There are comparatively few real-life sado-masochists, but all the more do the smash hits of popular culture cultivate fantasies that proceed in guilt and end in punishment, genre of Tennessee Williams. This calamitous requirement, that the lust be punished, used to be a standard of legality employed by learned judges. How stupid can grown men be! For the consumer, such fantasies have a dual advantage, they satisfy both the need for righteousness (sadistic superego) and the "weakness" of giving in to pleasure; they embody an exciting conflict. But the bother with such images when used privately as pornography is that they are socially disapproved and enhance individual guilt; the excitement proceeds against strong resistance, and mounting fear, and often dies; and there is a tendency to raise the ante. It is said that this kind of pornography creates juvenile delinquents; my hunch is rather that the type of delinquent who has a need to prove his potency has a hankering for such pornography, all the better if it can be combined with cerebral know-how, as in hipster literature. Nevertheless, it doesn't do him any good, for, on balance, it increases tension.

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FROM EVEN SUCH rudimentary analysis, it is clear that we can differentiate the moral quality of various pornography and make a rough rating of useful, indifferent, damaging. The social question, obviously, is how to improve the first and eliminate the last. Police courts and administrative officers, however, and even jury courts and high courts, are hardly the right forum for important and subtle moral debates. But expert opinion doesn't agree either; I could quote a crashing dissent to every proposition I have been making (except this one). Still, I am even less impressed by the bellow of J. Edgar Hoover that the police cannot wait for the experts to make up their minds, since one of the few things that is demonstrable is that ignorant suppression is wrong.

Yet I do not think that moral problems are private problems and can be left alone. Here I must dissent from my bold and honest classmate Judge Murtagh, who wants to leave most such issues to a person's conscience before God. On the contrary, it is because moral problems are so publicly important that they must be ongoingly decided by the whole public; and they are so subtle that only the manifold mind of all the institutions of society, skirmishing and experimenting, can figure them out and invent right solutions. In this essay I have been proposing to the judges a particular public experiment, a particular "firm morals and culture" and "permissiveness" in which there might be both the on going solution of these social evils and, more important, a growth into a more living culture. Let us speculate about it. Suppose that the courts altered their previous doctrine, as I have suggested, and now decided that it was not obscene to stir sexual desires and thoughts. And suppose that at the same time they somehow strengthened the requirement of a provable social or human utility (as would be a reasonable requirement for TV stations, for instance, since they use the public channels). This decision would simply express our best present-day thinking: that sexual feeling is a *fine* part of life and it is a *part* of life.

What might occur?

An immediate effect of this drastic change would be to open to the legal public media a very large, and I think soon preponderant, part of the traffic that is now subterranean and culturally uncontrolled. This is an advantage, for now the traffic can meet open evaluation, the appraisal of critics, the storm of angry letters that frightens advertisers.

In principle anything might now be shown, from a hint of sexual desire to the drama of the sexual act itself. Since the change-over would be so drastic, the court might aim at a deliberate slowness, and the great mass media would wisely want to meet together and agree on a prudent rate of change. The test of proper deliberateness would be that, *regarded as mere isolated and excerpted pornography,* showing the act would be little more interesting than the hint. And in between, it is hoped, there would develop the habit of treating sexual facts as the common part of life which they are.

Artistically, of course, the extremes are quite different, for it requires a setting of powerful passion and beauty to make artistically workable so vivid a scene as the sexual act. And indeed, one of the most salutary and hoped-for effects of the change I am proposing would be the radical diminution in sheer quantity, and the improvement in variety and quality, of the hundreds of shows that a person exposes himself to every year. Since at present the stimulation is low-grade, the repetition is chronic; perhaps if the experience were fuller, there would be less repetition. Perhaps we could have something else than the endless westerns, crime stories, and romances if there were more animal satisfaction and not merely the stereotyped symbolic satisfactions that these genres offer, with the sex climaxing in shooting, which for some reason can be shown. As it is, the public never gets beyond sex and violence. *Culturally, the*

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greatest curse of censorship is that it produces too many and too trivial art works, all of them inhibitedly pornographic.

The aim is to establish a principled general policy. The states and localities could continue to enforce whatever censorship they please, so long as they do not risk a national suit and are content to do without some of the national culture. The situation, as I envisage it, is somewhat the opposite of the school-integration decision; for the federal court is not intervening in any region, but is insisting that national policy must provide intellectual and historical leadership unhampered by local prejudices; yet as far as possible it will keep hands off to allow for various regional experimentation. This is not the effect of the court's present policy—e.g. in opening *Lady Chatterley* to the mails—for that does do violence to local sensibilities, necessarily, in order to give some scope for mature experience. But if there were a more principled general policy, and the courts were not continually obliged to fight, a generation too late, a rear-guard action against morons, the nation could allow the localities to be much *more* restrictive and self-defensive; in order to protect local option, they could even uphold the postmaster. It is possible in a federal system to decentralize the cultural climate. This allows for experiment and for citizens to have a freer choice of the life that suits their needs; but there must be freedom to experiment. Now we have the worst of the contrary situation: a degenerate centralism, a conformist mass made of the lowest common denominator of the narrow provincial multiplied by the venality of Hollywood and Madison Avenue.

LEGALIZED PORNOGRAPHY would, naturally, deplete the criminal market. (As Morris Ernst has speculated, the price on dirty postcards would drop from three for a dollar to three for a nickel.) In my cynical opinion, a first effect would be that the great publishers, networks, and film producers that now righteously keep their skirts clean and censor the prose and poetry of their moral and intellectual betters, would eagerly cash in. But a fairly quick effect, it is to be hoped, would be that such isolated pornography as a genre would simply become boring and diminish, just as women's short skirts today create not a flurry.

Finally, there would be immense cultural advantages. Less embarrassment, a franker language, and a more sensual feeling would magnify and ennoble all our art and perhaps bring some life to the popular culture; and conversely, the exposure to such art would help to humanize sexuality and break down the neurotic compartment of "mere lust." In the difficulties of our modern sexual transition—where we do not know the best form of the family, the proper attitude toward pre-marital and extra-marital sex, nor even what physical behavior is "normal"—we certainly can profit from the warm fantasy of these subjects in lyric and tragic art. And not least, any social change in the direction of permissiveness and practical approval, which integrates sexual expression with other ordinary or esteemed activities of life, must diminish the need to combine sex with punishment and degradation. To increase the possibility of satisfaction in real situations is to make unnecessary the hipster struggle for violent and apocalyptic experiences.

My argument is a simple one: a more principled high-level policy on obscenity, which realistically takes into account the tendency of our mores, would facilitate the moral and cultural structuring that can alone solve the problems of hard-core pornography; and it would also have beautiful cultural advantages. Whereas the present attempted repression by the police, administrators, and lower courts not only must continue to fail but keeps creating the evil it combats. Certainly many earnest people would consider the remedy I suggest to be worse than the disease, and they would prefer to muddle along. I am not sure that we can.

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ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER

SHIDDAH AND KUZIBA

A Story

SHIDDAH and her child, Kuziba, a schoolboy, were sitting nine yards inside the earth at a place where two ledges of rock came together and an underground stream was flowing. Shiddah's body was made of cobwebs; her hair reached to her anklebones; her feet were like those of a chicken; and she had the wings of a bat. Kuziba, who looked like his mother, had, in addition, donkey ears and wax horns. Kuziba was sick with a high fever. Every half hour his mother gave him medicine made of devil's dung mixed with copper juice, the darkness of a ditch, and the droppings of a red crow. Shiddah, leaning over her son, licked his navel with her long tongue. Kuziba was sleeping the restless sleep of the sick. Suddenly the boy woke up.

"I'm frightened, Mother," he said.

"Of what, dear?"

"Of light. Of human beings."

Shiddah trembled, and then spat on her son to ward off such evils.

"What are you talking about, child? We're safe here—far from light and far from human beings. It's as dark as Egypt here, thank God, and as silent as a cemetery. We're protected by nine yards of solid rock."

"But they say men can break rocks," said the boy.

"Old wives' tales!" countered his mother. "The power of man is only on the surface. The heights are for angels. The depths are for us. The lot of man is to creep on the skin of the earth like a louse."

"But what *are* human beings, Mother? Tell me."

"What are they? They're the waste of creation, offal; where sin is brewed in a kettle, mankind is the foam. Man is the mistake of God."

"How can God the Almighty make a mistake?" asked Kuziba.

"That is a secret, my child," answered Shiddah. "For when God created the last of all the worlds, the earth, his love for our mistress, Lilith, was stronger than ever. Only for an instant his gaze wandered, and in that instant he produced man—an evil mixture of flesh, blood, dung, and lust.

"Man!" Shiddah spat. "He has a white skin but inside he is red. He shouts as if he were strong, but really he is weak and shaky. Throw a stone and he breaks; use a thong and he bleeds. In heat he melts. In cold he freezes. There is a bellows in his chest which has to contract and expand constantly. In his left side is a small sac which must throb and quiver all the time. He stuffs himself with mildew of a kind which grows in mud or sand. This mildew

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The novels and stories of ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER, who writes in Yiddish, have been widely acclaimed. His last previous story in COMMENTARY appeared in February 1960, and his most recent novel, *The Magician of Lublin,* was reviewed by Irving Howe in October 1960. The story we print here comes from a collection, *The Spinoza of Market Street,* to be published in September by Farrar, Straus & Cudahy; it was translated by Elizabeth Pollet.

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he has to swallow constantly and after it passes through his body he must drop it out. He depends on a thousand accidents, and that's why he is so nasty and angry."

"But what do human beings do, Mother?"

"Evil," Shiddah answered her son, "only evil. But that keeps them busy so that they leave us in peace. Why, some of them even deny our existence. They think life can only breed on the surface of the earth. Like all fools they consider themselves clever.

"Imagine! They study wisdom on crushed wood pulp smeared with blotches of ink. And their ideas come from a slimy matter which they carry in a bony skull on their necks. They can't even run the way animals can: their legs are too feeble. But one thing they do possess in great measure: insolence. If God the Omnipotent did not have so much patience, he would have destroyed such rabble long ago."

Kuziba, who had listened intently to his mother's words, was not reassured. He stared at his mother feverishly.

"I'm afraid of them, Mother. I'm afraid."

"Don't be, Kuziba. They can't come here."

"In my sleep I dream about them." Kuziba trembled.

"Don't shake so, my darling little devil." Shiddah caressed her son. "Dreams are silly. They too come from the surface where chaos rules."

KUZIBA, WHO HAD lain for some time in a deep sleep, suddenly cried out. His mother awakened him.

"What's the matter, my son?"

"I'm frightened."

"Again?"

"I was dreaming about a man."

"What did he look like, my child?"

"So fierce. He made a noise that almost made me go deaf. And he had a light that was blinding me. I would have died from fear if you hadn't waked me."

"Be still, my son. I will chant a spell for you."

And Shiddah murmured:

Lord of the Depths
Curse the Evil Surface.
Lord of all Silence
Destroy the Din.
Save us, great Father
From Light, from Words,
From Man—his Deceit.
Save us, Lord God.

For a while it was quiet. Kuziba dozed off. Shiddah cradled her only son, swaying rhythmically above him. She thought of her husband, Hurmiz, who did not live at home. He went to the yeshiva of Chittim and Tachtim which was thousands of yards deeper, nearer the center of the earth. There he studied the secret of silence. Because silence has many degrees. As Shiddah knew, no matter how quiet it is, it can be even quieter. Silence is like fruits which have pits within pits, seeds within seeds. There is a final silence, a last point so small that it is nothing, yet so mighty that worlds can be created from it. This last point is the essence of all essences. Everything else is external, nothing but skin, peel, surface. He who has reached the final point, the last degree of silence, knows nothing of time and space, of death and lust. There male and female are forever united; will and deed are the same. This last silence is God. But God himself keeps on penetrating deeper into himself. He descends into his depths. His nature is like a cave without bottom. He keeps on investigating his own abyss.

Kuziba had fallen asleep. Shiddah, too, rested her head against a stone pillow. She imagined dreamily how Kuziba would grow up and become a big devil; how he would marry and become a father, and how she, Shiddah, would serve her daughter-in-law and her grandchildren. The babies would begin to call her grandma; and she would delouse their heads. She would braid the girls' hair, clean the boys' noses, take them to *cheder*, feed them, put them to sleep. Then the grandchildren

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themselves would grow up and be led under black canopies to marry the sons and daughters of the most reputable and well-established demons.

Her husband, Hurmiz, would become a rabbi of the netherworld, giving out amulets, reciting incantations. He would teach imps the chapter of curses on Mount Ebal, and the curses which Balaam should have used on the Israelites; he would teach them the prophecies of the false prophets, the words of temptation which the primeval snake used in the Garden of Eden; he would teach them the cunning of the fallen angels, the confusion of languages of those who built the tower of Babel; he would instruct them in the perversities of men at the time of the flood, in the vanities of Jeroboam and Ahab, Jezebel and Vashti. Then Hurmiz would become King of the Demons. He would be offered the throne in the Abyss of the Great Female, a thousand miles away from the surface where no one had ever heard of man and his insanity.

SUDDENLY Shiddah's fantasies were interrupted. There was a terrible thundering. Shiddah leapt to her feet. A racketing clamor filled the cave as if a thousand hammers were beating. Everything shook. Kuziba woke up with a scream.

"Mother, Mother!" yelled the boy. "Run, run!"

"Help, demons! Help!" Shiddah shouted.

She caught up Kuziba in her arms and tried to flee. But where to? From all sides came a rumbling and cracking. Rocks were crashing down; stones were flying about. The narrow hole which led further underground to the homes of the richer demons was already clogged. A rain of dust, sparks, stone splinters struck the mother and son. Then a light, awful, glaring, a thing with no name in the netherworld, blinded them with its approach. Presently, a monstrous, spiraling machine plunged through the ledge of rock in front of them. Shiddah fell back to the opposite wall, but at that moment it too shattered into a thousand pieces. A second light appeared and another gigantic screw, twisting round and round, pushing with a strange and overwhelming power, ready to crush and grind everything with a cruelty beyond good and evil, broke into their home.

Kuziba, with a terrible sigh, fainted. He hung in Shiddah's arms as if he were dead. Shiddah saw a crevice among some stones and crawled in. She huddled there stiff with fear. What she saw was more horrible than all the horror stories she had ever heard from all the old grandmothers and great-grandmothers. The drills turned a last time and then were silent. The stones stopped falling and in the smoke and dust men appeared—tall, two-legged, dirty, stinking, with white teeth in faces black with tar, and with eyes from which glared iniquity, malice, and pride. They spoke an ugly gibberish; laughed with abandonment; danced; stretched out their paws to one another. Then they began to drink a poisonous beverage, the sheer smell of which made Shiddah faint. She wanted to rouse Kuziba, but she was afraid if he came to he would begin screaming, or even might die at the sight of such monsters. The only thing Shiddah could do now was pray. She prayed to Satan, to Asmodeus, to Lilith, and to all the other powers which maintain creation. Help us, she called from the cranny in which she was hiding, save us, not because of my merit but because of the merit of my scholarly husband, because of my innocent child and my worthy ancestors. Long, long, Shiddah knelt in the crack in the stones and prayed and wept. When she again opened her eyes, the ugly images had gone and the noise had subsided. What remained was garbage, a stench, and a ball of light which hung above her head like fire from Gehenna. Only now did she wake up her son.

"Kuziba, Kuziba. Wake up!" Shiddah called. "We are in great danger!"

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Kuziba opened his eyes. "What is this? Oh, Mother. Light!"

The boy trembled and screamed. For a long while Shiddah comforted him, kissing him and caressing him. But they could not stay there any more. They had to find refuge. But where? The road down to Hurmiz was cut off. Shiddah was now a grass widow, Kuziba a fatherless child. There was only one way to go. Shiddah had heard the saying that if you cannot go down you have to go up. Mother and son began to climb to the surface. Up there, there would also be caves, marshes, graves, dark rocky crevices; there, too, she had heard, there were dense forests and empty deserts. Man had not covered the whole earth with his greed. There, too, lived demons, imps, shades, hobgoblins. True, they were refugees, exiles from the netherworld. But still, exile is better than slavery.

For Shiddah knew that the last victory would be to darkness. Until then, demons who were forsaken or driven out would have to suffer in patience. But a time would come when the light of the universe would be extinguished. All the stars would be snuffed out; all voices, silenced; all surfaces, cut off. God and Satan would be one. The remembrance of man and his abominations would be only a bad dream which God had spun out for a while to distract himself in his eternal night.

IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Reflections on the Eichmann Case	HAROLD ROSENBERG
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The Political Economy of the Kennedy Administration	OSCAR GASS
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TOM BROOKS

THE NEW ADMINISTRATION & ORGANIZED LABOR

THE AIR OF EXPECTANCY that has surrounded the beginnings of the Kennedy administration has a decided piquancy for organized labor. For eight years the unions have longed for a friend in the White House; harassed by the renewed recalcitrance of management and apprehensive over the economic downturn, they worked very hard to elect John F. Kennedy, whose bona fides as a friend of labor are exemplary. But the fruits of victory are not always of an unmixed sweetness. The alliance between organized labor and the new administration is an uneasy one indeed.

For the last four or five years, the unions have been floundering in a morass of self-pity and frustration. It was not possible, they argued, to increase their membership when the National Labor Relations Board was loaded against labor; when union resolutions welcoming the Supreme Court decision on school desegregation hampered their activities in the South; and when white collar workers were being scared off by the exposures of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field, headed by Senator John F. McClellan. But whatever the causes, the blunt fact was that the high expectations of great activity and even greater achievements raised by the merger of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations in 1955 were never realized.

The blame, until now, could be lodged at President Eisenhower's door. But the election of Kennedy has placed the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of labor itself. The new President is without question a friend of the unions, and he also knows more about labor—its strengths as well as its weaknesses—than any other current public official (except, perhaps, for his brother Robert) and certainly more than any previous President. Franklin D. Roosevelt was intuitively sympathetic to the workers and supported their efforts to organize, but he did not have Kennedy's detailed knowledge about unions. Harry S. Truman received his labor education, so to speak, in office. Kennedy, by contrast, came to the Presidency after twelve years of intensive legislative experience in labor affairs—including an instructive term of service on the McClellan Committee.

This knowledgeability is what lay behind the caution which the new President exercised in his appointment of a Secretary of Labor. In December, AFL-CIO President George Meany had arrived at Kennedy's Georgetown residence with the names of five elected union officials, all of whom had the federation's approval as candidates for the cabinet post. Kennedy,

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however, in the light of his experience on the McClellan Committee, well knew that he could not appoint a labor executive to administer the reform provisions of the Landrum-Griffin Act; he chose, instead, a man who was *from* the unions but not *of* them. As special counsel to the AFL-CIO's Ethical Practices Committee, Arthur J. Goldberg had won recognition and respect—both from the public and from the Kennedy brothers—for his independence of union-bossism. To be sure, many union officials would like to disown Goldberg altogether for his part in the cleaning up of corruption inside the labor movement and in the expulsion of the Teamsters from the AFL-CIO. But they dare not do so. Goldberg was the perfect appointee for an administration basically friendly to the unions but also only too aware of their failings and vices.

The uneasiness in the relations between organized labor and the Kennedy administration has been evident in another important appointment as well. While four key Labor Department posts went to unionists, Meany failed to put across the appointment of Joseph D. Keenan—an AFL-CIO vice-president and secretary-treasurer of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers—as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower. This job is of much greater interest to the unions *qua* unions than the Labor Department posts they managed to secure, and it is of special importance to the building trades, which have large dealings with defense agencies (both governmental and private) and which have been involved in jurisdictional strikes from time to time. But in the end, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara barred the selection of Keenan on the ground that he was too close to the building trades.

However unhappy the unions may be over these developments, they yet can confidently expect that the Kennedy administration will operate within the confines of existing law, to make it less burdensome to the unions—particularly such weaker unions as the Textile Workers—and so help organized labor rather than obstruct it. The Republican 3–2 majority on the National Labor Relations Board has now been upset. Intervention in crippling—or potentially crippling—strikes will be more imaginative, as the recent settlement of the New York harbor strike demonstrated. And since management much prefers the stand-off, wait-and-see approach of the Eisenhower era, such intervention, however impartial, may be counted a definite gain for the unions.

For all this, however, the present crisis in the labor movement can only be dealt with by the unions themselves, and unless they act, they cannot avoid a serious and continuing decline in power and prestige. Unions, like any other social institution, must either grow or atrophy—and this means expanding their membership while also adjusting to the new conditions which economic development has inevitably brought about. The character of the American labor movement in the 1960's is bound to change—as a result of automation, the growth of white collar employment both within manufacturing and outside it, the increasing importance of skilled workmen, and the decline of the unskilled and semi-skilled. Whether or not organized labor can meet the challenges inherent in these developments depends to a large extent on its capacity to take drastic action in a number of vital areas.

THE LABOR movement entered the 1950's in the full flush of power. Despite the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947—immediately denounced by unionists as "a slave labor law"—the unions scored some of their most impressive gains in the decade that followed. They negotiated pensions, annual productivity factors, cost-of-living increases, health and welfare benefits, and the guaranteed annual wage. The merger of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations was to have capped this performance with still

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more daring efforts and greater achievements by the unified house of labor. Actually, however, as John L. Lewis was quick to point out, the new federation was tied together by "a rope of sand." Many unions were against the merger, while others (especially in the AFL), went along reluctantly, insisting on the continuation of the old AFL tradition of autonomy. Even the CIO carved out an area of autonomy for itself in the newly constituted Industrial Union Department. What kept the merger from breaking down, ironically enough, were the McClellan revelations which enabled George Meany and his supporters to convert what might have been a splintering off into a casting out of devils—a very different kind of operation, as Lenin well knew. Once the AFL-CIO had been officially stamped "clean" by the McClellan Committee, the unions expelled for corruption could not conceivably have formed still another federation of labor.

The disciplinary actions taken by the AFL-CIO executive council to eliminate corruption had the further effect of virtually destroying the principle of autonomy for individual unions within the federation. Until the Teamsters were ousted, many unions still hoped to protect their right to run their own affairs without interference from the federation. "I can remember," says George M. Harrison, president of the Railway Clerks and the oldest ranking member of the AFL-CIO executive council, "when if you were to say something on the convention floor about another affiliate, the head of that union would get up and say, 'Look, you run your union and I'll run mine.' And that was the end of that." But under the harsh light of the McClellan Committee's probing, the AFL-CIO drew up its own Ethical Practices Code, providing standards against which the conduct of any individual union or union official could be measured. Violations of the code meant that the federation's officers would invoke the constitutional provisions against racketeering. Armed with these powers, Meany and the executive council picked off some of the most powerful proponents of autonomy within the federation, the mighty Teamsters among them. Indeed, every action taken against corruption within the federation since the merger has been aimed at an AFL union which had insisted on the preservation of autonomy. Thus Meany has skillfully used the corruption issue as a tool for strengthening the powers of the AFL-CIO executive. This is not to belittle his very real achievement in weeding out corruption, but simply to note that a by-product of the anti-racketeering drive has been to set a precedent for intervention by the AFL-CIO executive in the internal affairs of affiliates.

It is true, of course, that Meany has hesitated to use this new power on issues other than racketeering. He has not cracked down on the building trades-industrial unions jurisdictional fight, nor has he pushed the struggle against discriminatory practices within the unions as hard as some observers believe he should. Partly this is a question of priorities and partly it is the absence of an equivalent public pressure to that engendered by the McClellan exposures. Nonetheless, the powers and precedents are there for Meany or any subsequent president of the AFL-CIO to use.

THE AFL-CIO, THEN, is in fairly good condition for facing the 1960's. The McClellan era is at an end, despite the resumption of hearings,* and there are signs that the federation intends to put its newly developed strength as a national labor organization to active use. It has set up a central investment policy agency to advise its constituents on investing their

* The present hearings are only a continuation of the efforts to crush James Hoffa. If they should succeed—or if the new Attorney General manages to prosecute Hoffa—they will have paved the way for the powerful Teamsters union to return to the federation, a move that would not only be welcomed by most trade unionists but one that would further strengthen the AFL-CIO.

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vast reserves (pension funds and the like). It has shown a renewed interest in recruiting untapped groups, in particular the white collar workers and California's 250,000 farm workers. The immediate goal of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee—into which organized labor has sunk roughly $500,000—is some 50,000 dues-payers, enough to start a new international union and to provide the impetus for starting organizing drives elsewhere.

The real testing ground of trade union survival and strength in the 1960's, however, is likely to lie in the area of lobbying and political action rather than the traditional areas of organizing and collective bargaining. Though the unions have worked here and there for appropriate social legislation during the past fifteen years, they have concentrated most of their energy not on politics but on collective bargaining. Instead of seeking improved pensions through the social security system, they have secured supplementary pension benefits under contracts with private firms. Instead of seeking medical care benefits through some variant of socialized medicine, they have secured coverage through negotiated insurance plans. Instead of seeking higher unemployment compensation through the federal-state system, they have gone all out for supplementary unemployment benefits (SUB) paid by industry. The result—as Daniel Bell demonstrated in his article "The Subversion of Collective Bargaining"*—has been a heavy imbalance favoring workers in the larger, better organized industries. The giant unions worked out a *quid pro quo* with their industrial counterparts: collective bargaining became a means of justifying price increases, and in return, industry granted major wage gains and substantial improvements in fringe benefits. But it was usually difficult to extend similar gains to the weaker unions, whose members, moreover, had to bear the additional burden of higher prices without corresponding increases in income.

This is only one of the many indications that collective bargaining of the traditional kind is no longer an effective instrument for achieving the major social goals of the labor movement. Thus the system of supplementary unemployment benefits, which has been proudly described by Arthur J. Goldberg† as "a method, developed in the collective bargaining process, of meeting the social need for which a [guaranteed] annual wage is suggested," now seems to have reached its limit even in the giant industries. On January 24, U. S. Steel announced that it had cut SUB payments by 7½ per cent for the month, making a total reduction so far of 40 per cent. In February, 65,000 retired soft-coal miners will have their pensions reduced from $100 a month to $75. The cut was attributed by Miss Josephine Roche, the union's welfare and retirement fund director, to "economic conditions" that have "severely affected the coal industry and have caused a large decline in the revenues of the trust fund."

In addition to all this, the economic downturn has given management the weapons it needed to hold down labor costs and to retain control over the allocation of returns on recent investment in automation. To secure these goals, management is willing to "invest"—the words are General Electric's—in strikes. Strike action has thus become a method by which management can dispose of inventories and fight for the upper hand in running factories. For today, strikes are not really over wages or even fringe benefits; they have to do with the question of job rights—the question of whether the employer has the right to abolish a job without the specific consent of the workers involved. Or, to put it another way: does the worker have the right to a specific job, regardless of technological change, because he has invested *N* years of his life in it?

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* COMMENTARY, March 1960.

† See his reply in the July 1960 COMMENTARY to the article by Daniel Bell cited above.—ED.

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This question—brought dramatically to the fore by automation—has aroused greater passion than any issue in labor-management struggles since the sit-down strikes of the 1930's. The sit-downs established the bare essential fact of a job right; the employer could no longer fire a worker because of his interest in organizing a union. Once having won recognition, the unions turned from the issue of the worker's property right in his job to the benefits surrounding the job—higher wages, vacations, adjudication of grievances, and so on. Today, the fundamental job right is being challenged anew as a result of automation; management now sees an opportunity to reassert old prerogatives.

Union howls of anguish to the contrary notwithstanding, management has no desire to destroy the unions; it finds them much too useful as a disciplinary force. It does, however, wish to win back the power to determine the new conditions of work in automated plants, and to do this, it must challenge the definition of job rights that is embodied in the extensive grievance procedures, seniority rules, work practices, etc., which have developed in the prosperous postwar years. It should be recognized that despite what management now argues, work practices (which of course includes featherbedding) did not spring up in a wholly arbitrary or irrational fashion. Some did, but many more came into being as a result of union victories in countless subterranean battles fought out from day to day in the shop. Management lost these battles in part because it did not pay to push employees to the striking point during periods of prosperity.

The recession, however, has provided management with an opportunity to reopen the struggle. This has served to aggravate the strains caused by automation, and if the techniques of collective bargaining can be applied to resolving the issue, they will have found a new and vitally useful function.

BUT BEFORE COLLECTIVE bargaining can become effective in this area, the unions will have to face another question posed by automation—the same question that confronted John L. Lewis at the end of the war. Lewis had to decide whether to compel the ailing coal industry to spread what little work there was among all, or most, of the United Mine Workers membership, or to cooperate with the industry in sharply cutting down the number of mine workers. He opted for a small but highly paid work force. Today, a similar choice exists for unions not only in ailing industries like coal and the railroads, but also—because of the long-run decline in factory employment that will inevitably be brought about by automation—in nearly all of manufacturing. Some unions, of course, may seek to evade the issue—as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers have done—by demanding tariffs to protect a weak industry. But others by the logic of automation will almost certainly come to take the John L. Lewis turn in the decade ahead. The change, in fact, has already been signaled. The United Auto Workers, for example, two years ago granted a virtual veto power over contracts to its skilled trades department, a move that makes very little sense unless one assumes that that department is in future to become the major force within the union. The same union's interest in placing wages on a salary basis, rather than on an hourly or piecework basis, is another indication, for such an arrangement would ease relations between white collar workers in the industry—who are growing in number and are a target of union organization—and the highly skilled, numerically small blue collar work-force of the future.

A turn by the unions in the direction of the John L. Lewis policy could presage a return of collective bargaining collusion at the expense of the rest of the nation. A framework for such collusion already exists in the joint conferences of labor and management that seem to be developing in the steel industry. But unhappily for

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industrial syndicalism, the Lewis turn will not be as easily accomplished by Walter P. Reuther or, for that matter, David J. McDonald, as it was by the autocratic head of the mine union. Indeed, McDonald and Reuther are faced with greater pressures in the other direction—toward the shorter work week as a means of spreading available employment. This pressure will not ease until they have won higher unemployment benefits and some sort of automation compensation that will enable affected workers to increase their mobility both geographically and educationally. Given employer resistance to increased costs, such benefits are unlikely to be won by way of collective bargaining, which means that the unions will have to look to the federal government for relief. This, in turn, means an intensification of political activity by the AFL-CIO.

One must, however, be cautious in predicting any great swing toward politics on the part of the unions. For one thing, the weight of tradition is against it. Secondly, the reshaping of the giant industrial unions—the most political of our unions—into more compact, craftlike unions may very well bring enough satisfaction through collective bargaining to ease their need for political action. And finally, any success the labor movement may have among white collar workers is likely to be achieved by winning the same gains and protections for them which have already been won by blue collar workers —and these are collective bargaining gains, not political ones.

Nevertheless, these factors are offset by others—among them, the ideological irascibility of management, the job losses now being suffered by union members, and the need to improve the federal government's antiquated welfare structure—which all push labor toward intensified political activity. Nor would this be a thoroughgoing departure from tradition; for, historically, when the unions have been confronted by stiffening employer resistance to bargaining demands, they have sought relief in legislative and political action. The AFL-CIO legislative program is already to the left of President Kennedy's (this is another source of the uneasiness in the alliance between the new administration and the unions). Moreover, the method that the Kennedy administration will probably use in order to bring about a change in the collective bargaining climate—labor-management summitry—is unlikely to work, since the balance is tipped in management's favor to begin with. It pays management to boycott such conferences or to participate merely for the sake of public relations. A substantial increase in federal welfare benefits would take the pressure off the unions, enable them to make the John L. Lewis decision with the least dissatisfaction among their members, and free both labor and management to work out the real issue of job control through collective bargaining. It is for these reasons that a new emphasis on political activity by organized labor would serve not only its own interests but those of the nation as a whole.

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PHILIP ROTH

WRITING AMERICAN FICTION

SEVERAL WINTERS back, while I was living in Chicago, the city was shocked and mystified by the death of two teen-age girls. So far as I know the populace is mystified still; as for the shock, Chicago is Chicago, and one week's dismemberment fades into the next's. The victims this particular year were sisters. They went off one December night to see an Elvis Presley movie, for the sixth or seventh time we are told, and never came home. Ten days passed and fifteen and twenty, and then the whole bleak city, every street and alley, was being searched for the missing Grimes girls, Pattie and Babs. A girl friend had seen them at the movie, a group of boys had had a glimpse of them afterwards getting into a black Buick; another group said a green Chevy, and so on and so forth, until one day the snow melted and the unclothed bodies of the two girls were discovered in a roadside ditch in a forest preserve on the West Side of Chicago. The coroner said he didn't know the cause of death and then the newspapers took over. One paper, I forget which one, ran a drawing of the girls on the back page, in bobby socks and levis and babushkas: Pattie and Babs a foot tall, and in four colors, like Dixie Dugan on Sundays. The mother of the two girls wept herself right into the arms of a local newspaper lady, who apparently set up her typewriter on the Grimes's front porch and turned out a column a day, telling us that these had been good girls, hard-working girls, average girls, churchgoing girls, et cetera. Late in the evening one could watch television interviews featuring schoolmates and friends of the Grimes sisters: the teen-age girls look around, dying to giggle; the boys stiffen in their leather jackets. "Yeah, I knew Babs, yeah she was all right, yeah, she was popular . . . ." On and on until at last comes a confession. A Skid Row bum of thirty-five or so, a dishwasher, a prowler, a no-good named Benny Bedwell, admits to killing both girls, after he and a pal had cohabited with them for several weeks in various flea-bitten hotels. Hearing the news, the mother weeps and cries and tells the newspaper lady that the man is a liar—her girls, she insists now, were murdered the night they went off to the movie. The coroner continues to maintain (with rumblings from the press) that the girls show no signs of having had sexual intercourse. Meanwhile, everybody in Chicago is buying four papers a day, and Benny Bedwell, having supplied the police with an hour-by-hour chronicle of his adventures, is tossed in jail. Two nuns, teachers of the girls at the school they attended, are sought out by the newspapermen. They are surrounded and questioned and finally

PHILIP ROTH's first book of fiction, *Goodbye, Columbus,* which won a National Book Award last year, contained several stories that originally appeared in COMMENTARY. The present essay was read at Stanford University under the auspices of the third *Esquire* symposium on Writers in America Today.

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one of the sisters explains all. "They were not exceptional girls," the sister says, "they had no hobbies." About this time, some good-natured soul digs up Mrs. Bedwell, Benny's mother, and a meeting is arranged between this old woman and the mother of the slain teen-agers. Their picture is taken together, two overweight, overworked American ladies, quite befuddled but sitting up straight for the photographers. Mrs. Bedwell apologizes for her Benny. She says, "I never thought any boy of mine would do a thing like that." Two weeks later, or maybe three, her boy is out on bail, sporting several lawyers and a new one-button roll suit. He is driven in a pink Cadillac to an out-of-town motel where he holds a press conference. Yes—he barely articulates—he is the victim of police brutality. No, he is not a murderer; a degenerate maybe, but even that is going out the window. He is changing his life—he is going to become a carpenter (a carpenter!) for the Salvation Army, his lawyers say. Immediately, Benny is asked to sing (he plays the guitar) in a Chicago night spot for two thousand dollars a week, or is it ten thousand? I forget. What I remember is that suddenly there is a thought that comes flashing into the mind of the spectator, or newspaper reader: is this all Public Relations? But of course not—two girls are dead. At any rate, a song begins to catch on in Chicago, "The Benny Bedwell Blues." Another newspaper launches a weekly contest: "How Do You Think the Grimes Girls Were Murdered?" and a prize is given for the best answer (in the opinion of the judges). And now the money begins; donations, hundreds of them, start pouring in to Mrs. Grimes from all over the city and the state. For what? From whom? Most contributions are anonymous. Just money, thousands and thousands of dollars—the *Sun-Times* keeps us informed of the grand total. Ten thousand, twelve thousand, fifteen thousand. Mrs. Grimes sets about refinishing and redecorating her house. A strange man steps forward, by the name of Shultz or Schwartz—I don't really remember, but he is in the appliance business and he presents Mrs. Grimes with a whole new kitchen. Mrs. Grimes, beside herself with appreciation and joy, turns to her surviving daughter and says, "Imagine me in that kitchen!" Finally the poor woman goes out and buys two parakeets (or maybe another Mr. Shultz presented them as a gift); one parakeet she calls "Babs," the other, "Pattie." At just about this point, Benny Bedwell, doubtless having barely learned to hammer a nail in straight, is extradited to Florida on the charge of having raped a twelve-year-old girl there. Shortly thereafter I left Chicago myself, and so far as I know, though Mrs. Grimes hasn't her two girls, she has a brand new dishwasher and two small birds.

AND WHAT IS the moral of so long a story? Simply this: that the American writer in the middle of the 20th century has his hands full in trying to understand, and then describe, and then make *credible* much of the American reality. It stupefies, it sickens, it infuriates, and finally it is even a kind of embarrassment to one's own meager imagination. The actuality is continually outdoing our talents, and the culture tosses up figures almost daily that are the envy of any novelist. Who, for example, could have invented Charles Van Doren? Roy Cohn and David Schine? Sherman Adams and Bernard Goldfine? Dwight David Eisenhower? Several months back most of the country heard one of the candidates for the presidency of the United States, the office of Jefferson, Lincoln, and FDR, say something like, "Now if you feel that Senator Kennedy is right, then I sincerely believe you should vote for Senator Kennedy, and if you feel that I am right, I humbly submit that you vote for me. Now I feel, and this is certainly a personal opinion, that I am right . . . ." and so on. Though it did not appear quite this way

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to some thirty-four million voters, it still seems to me a little easy to pick on Mr. Nixon as someone to ridicule, and it is not for that reason that I have bothered to paraphrase his words here. If one was at first amused by him, one was ultimately astonished. As a literary creation, as some novelist's image of a certain kind of human being, he might have seemed believable, but I myself found that on the TV screen, as a real public image, a political fact, my mind balked at taking him in. Whatever else the television debates produced in me, I should like to point out, as a literary curiosity, that they also produced a type of professional envy. All the machinations over make-up, rebuttal time, all the business over whether Mr. Nixon should look at Mr. Kennedy when he replied, or should look away—all of it was so beside the point, so fantastic, so weird and astonishing, that I found myself beginning to wish I had invented it. That may not, of course, be a literary fact at all, but a simple psychological one—for finally I began to wish that *someone* had invented it, and that it was not real and with us.

The daily newspapers then fill one with wonder and awe: is it possible? is it happening? And of course with sickness and despair. The fixes, the scandals, the insanities, the treacheries, the idiocies, the lies, the pieties, the noise . . . . Recently, in COMMENTARY,* Benjamin DeMott wrote that the "deeply lodged suspicion of the times [is] namely, that events and individuals are unreal, and that power to alter the course of the age, of my life and your life, is actually vested nowhere." There seems to be, said DeMott, a kind of "universal descent into unreality." The other night—to give a benign example of the descent—my wife turned on the radio and heard the announcer offering a series of cash prizes for the three best television plays of five minutes' duration written by children. At such moments it is difficult to find one's way around the kitchen; certainly few days go by when incidents far less benign fail to remind us of what DeMott is talking about. When Edmund Wilson says that after reading *Life* magazine he feels that he does not belong to the country depicted there, that he does not live in that country, I think I understand what he means.

HOWEVER, for a writer of fiction to feel that he does not really live in the country in which he lives—as represented by *Life* or by what he experiences when he steps out his front door—must certainly seem a serious occupational impediment. For what will be his subject? His landscape? It is the tug of reality, its mystery and magnetism, that leads one into the writing of fiction—what then when one is not mystified, but stupefied? not drawn but repelled? It would seem that what we might get would be a high proportion of historical novels or contemporary satire—or perhaps just nothing. No books. Yet the fact is that almost weekly one finds on the best-seller list another novel which is set in Mamaroneck or New York City or Washington, with people moving through a world of dishwashers and TV sets and advertising agencies and Senatorial investigations. It all *looks* as though the writers are still turning out books about our world. There is *Cash McCall* and *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* and *Marjorie Morningstar* and *The Enemy Camp* and *Advise and Consent,* and so on. But what is crucial, of course, is that these books aren't very good. Not that these writers aren't sufficiently horrified with the landscape to suit me—quite the contrary. They are generally full of concern for the world about them; finally, however, they just don't seem able to imagine the corruptions and vulgarities and treacheries of American public life any more profoundly than they can imagine human character—that is, the country's private life. All issues are gen-

* "Looking for Intelligence in Washington" (October 1960).—ED.

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erally solvable, which indicates that they are not so much wonder-struck or horror-struck or even plain struck by a state of civilization, as they are provoked by some topical controversy. "Controversial" is a common word in the critical language of this literature as it is, say, in the language of the TV producer. But it is clear that though one may refer to a "problem" as being controversial, one does not usually speak of a state of civilization as controversial, or a state of the soul.

It is hardly news that in best-sellerdom we frequently wind up with the hero coming to terms and settling down in Scarsdale, or wherever, knowing himself. And on Broadway, in the third act, someone says, "Look, why don't you just love each other?" and the protagonist, throwing his hand to his forehead, cries, "Oh God, why didn't *I* think of that!" and before the bulldozing action of love, all else collapses—verisimilitude, truth, and interest. It is like "Dover Beach" ending happily for Matthew Arnold, and for us, because the poet is standing at the window with a woman who understands him. If the investigation of our times and the impact of these times upon human personality were to become the sole property of Wouk, Weidman, Sloan Wilson, Cameron Hawley, and the theatrical *amor-vincit-omnia* boys it would indeed be unfortunate, for it would be somewhat like leaving sex to the pornographers, where again there is more to what is happening than first meets the eye.

AND OF COURSE the times have not yet been left completely to lesser minds and talents. There is Norman Mailer. And he is an interesting example, I think, of one in whom our era has provoked such a magnificent disgust that dealing with it in fiction has almost come to seem, for him, beside the point. He has become an actor in the cultural drama, the difficulty of which, I should guess, is that it leaves one with considerably less time to be a writer. For instance, to defy the Civil Defense authorities and their H-bomb drills, you have to take off a morning from the typewriter and go down and stand outside of City Hall; then if you're lucky and they toss you in jail, you have to give up an evening at home and your next morning's work as well. To defy Mike Wallace, or challenge his principle-less aggression, or simply use him or straighten him out, you must first go on the program—there's one night shot. Then you may well spend the next two weeks (I am speaking from memory) disliking yourself for having gone, and then two more writing an article (or a confession to a gentle friend) in which you attempt to explain why you did it and what it was like. "It's the age of the slob," says a character in William Styron's new novel. "If we don't watch out they're going to drag us under. . . ." And the dragging under, as we see, takes numerous forms. We get, for instance, from Mailer a book like *Advertisements for Myself,* a chronicle for the most part of why I did it and what it was like—and who I have it in for: life as a substitute for fiction. An infuriating, self-indulgent, boisterous, mean book, not much worse than most advertising we have to put up with, I think —but also, taken as a whole, a curiously moving book, moving in its revelation of the connection between one writer and the times that have given rise to him, in the revelation of a despair so great that the man who bears it, or is borne by it, seems for the time being—out of either choice or necessity—to have given up on making an imaginative assault upon the American experience, and has become instead the champion of a kind of public revenge. Unfortunately, however, what one is champion of one day, one may wind up victim of the next; that is everybody's risk. Once having written *Advertisements for Myself,* I don't see that you can write it again. Mr. Mailer probably now finds himself in the unenviable position of having to put up or shut up. Who knows—maybe it's where

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he wanted to be. My own feeling is that times are tough for a writer when he takes to writing letters to his newspaper rather than those complicated, disguised letters to himself, which are stories.

The last is not meant to be a sententious, or a condescending remark, or even a generous one. However one suspects Mailer's style or his reasons, one sympathizes with the impulse that leads him to be—or to want to be—a critic, a reporter, a sociologist, a journalist, a figure, or even Mayor of New York. For what is particularly tough about the times is writing about them, as a serious novelist or storyteller. Much has been made, much of it by the writers themselves, of the fact that the American writer has no status and no respect and no audience: the news I wish to bear is of a loss more central to the task itself, a loss of subject; or if not a loss, if to say that is, romantically and inexactly and defensively, an attempt to place most of the responsibility outside the writer for what may finally be nothing more than the absence of genius in our times—then let me say a voluntary withdrawal of interest by the writer of fiction from some of the grander social and political phenomena of our times.

Of course there have been writers who have tried to meet these phenomena head-on. It seems to me I have read several books or stories in the past few years in which one character or another starts to talk about "The Bomb," and the conversation generally leaves me feeling half convinced, and in some extreme instances, even with a certain amount of sympathy for fall-out; it is like people in college novels having long talks about what kind of generation they are. But what then? What can the writer do with so much of the American reality as it is? Is the only other possibility to be Gregory Corso and thumb your nose at the whole thing? The attitude of the Beats (if such a phrase has meaning) is not in certain ways without appeal. The whole thing is a kind of joke. America, ha-ha. The only trouble is that such a position doesn't put very much distance between Beatdom and its sworn enemy, best-sellerdom—not much more, at any rate, than what it takes to get from one side of a nickel to the other: for what is America, ha-ha, but the simple reverse of America, hoo-ray?

IT IS POSSIBLE that I have exaggerated both the serious writer's response to our cultural predicament, and his inability or unwillingness to deal with it imaginatively. There seems to me little, in the end, to be used as proof for an assertion having to do with the psychology of a nation's writers, outside, that is, of their books themselves. So, with this particular assertion, the argument may appear to be somewhat compromised in that the evidence to be submitted is not so much the books that have been written, but the ones that have been left unwritten and unfinished, and those that have not even been considered worthy of the attempt. Which is not to say that there have not been certain literary signs, certain obsessions and innovations and concerns, to be found in the novels of our best writers, supporting the notion that the world we have been given, the society and the community, has ceased to be as suitable or as manageable a subject for the novelist as it once may have been.

Let me begin with some words about the man who, by reputation at least, is *the* writer of the age. The response of college students to the works of J. D. Salinger should indicate to us that perhaps he, more than anyone else, has not turned his back on the times, but instead, has managed to put his finger on what is most significant in the struggle going on today between the self (all selves, not just the writer's) and the culture. *The Catcher in the Rye* and the recent stories in the *New Yorker* having to do with the Glass family surely take place in the social here and now. But what about the self, what about the hero? This question seems to me of particular interest here, for in Salinger

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more than in most of his contemporaries, there has been an increasing desire of late to place the figure of the writer himself directly in the reader's line of vision, so that there is an equation, finally, between the insights of the narrator as, say, brother to Seymour Glass, and as a man who is a writer by profession. And what of Salinger's heroes? Well, Holden Caulfield, we discover, winds up in an expensive sanitarium. And Seymour Glass commits suicide finally, but prior to that he is the apple of his brother's eye—and why? He has learned to live in this world—but how? By not living in it. By kissing the soles of little girls' feet and throwing rocks at the head of his sweetheart. He is a saint, clearly. But since madness is undesirable and sainthood, for most of us, out of the question, the problem of how to live *in* this world is by no means answered; unless the answer is that one cannot. The only advice we seem to get from Salinger is to be charming on the way to the loony bin. Of course, Salinger is under no burden to supply us, writers or readers, with advice, though I must admit that I find myself growing more and more curious about this professional writer, Buddy Glass, and how *he* manages to coast through this particular life in the arms of sanity.

It is not Buddy Glass, though, in whom I do not finally believe, but Seymour himself. Seymour is as unreal to me as his world, in all its endless and marvelous detail, is decidedly credible. I am touched by the lovingness that is attributed to him, as one is touched by so many of the gestures and attitudes in Salinger, but this lovingness, in its totality and otherworldliness, becomes for me in the end an attitude of the writer's, a cry of desperation, even a program, more than an expression of character. If we forgive this lapse, it is, I think, because we understand the depth of the despairing.

There is, too, in Salinger the suggestion that mysticism is a possible road to salvation; at least some of his characters respond well to an intensified, emotional religious belief. Now my own involvement with Zen is slight, but as I understand it in Salinger, the deeper we go into this world, the further we can get away from it. If you contemplate a potato long enough, it stops being a potato in the usual sense; unfortunately, though, it is the usual sense that we have to deal with from day to day. For all the loving handling of the world's objects, for all the reverence of life and feeling, there seems to me, in the Glass family stories as in *The Catcher,* a spurning of life as it is lived in this world, in this reality—this place and time is seen as unworthy of those few precious people who have been set down in it only to be maddened and destroyed.

A SPURNING OF OUR WORLD—though of a much different order—seems to occur in another of our most talented writers, Bernard Malamud. Even, one recalls, when Malamud writes a book about baseball, a book called *The Natural,* it is not baseball as it is played in Yankee Stadium, but a wild, wacky baseball, where a player who is instructed to knock the cover off the ball promptly steps up to the plate and knocks it off; the batter swings and the inner hard string core of the ball goes looping out to centerfield, where the confused fielder commences to tangle himself in the unwinding sphere; then the shortstop runs out, and with his teeth, bites the center-fielder and the ball free from one another. Though *The Natural* is not Malamud's most successful, nor his most significant book, it is at any rate our introduction to his world, which has a kind of historical relationship to our own, but is by no means a replica of it. By historical I mean that there are really things called baseball players and really things called Jews, but there much of the similarity ends. The Jews of *The Magic Barrel* and the Jews of *The Assistant,* I have reason to suspect, are not the Jews of New York City or Chicago. They are a kind of invention, a metaphor to stand for certain human possibilities and certain

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human promises, and I find myself further inclined to believe this when I read of a statement attributed to Malamud which goes, "All men are Jews." In fact we know this is not so; even the men who are Jews aren't sure they're Jews. But Malamud, as a writer of fiction, has not shown specific interest in the anxieties and dilemmas and corruptions of the modern American Jew, the Jew we think of as characteristic of our times; rather, his people live in a timeless depression and a placeless Lower East Side; their society is not affluent, their predicament not cultural. I am not saying—one cannot, of Malamud—that he has spurned life or an examination of the difficulties of being human. What it is to be human, to be humane, is his subject: connection, indebtedness, responsibility, these are his moral concerns. What I do mean to point out is that he does not —or has not yet—found the contemporary scene a proper or sufficient backdrop for his tales of heartlessness and heartache, of suffering and regeneration.

Now Malamud and Salinger do not speak, think, or feel for all writers, and yet their fictional response to the world about them—what they choose to mention, what they choose to avoid—is of interest to me on the simple grounds that they are two of our best. Surely there are other writers around, and capable ones too, who have not taken the particular roads that these two have; however, even with some of these others, I wonder if we may not be witnessing a response to the times, perhaps not so dramatic as in Salinger and Malamud, but a response nevertheless.

LET US TAKE up the matter of prose style. Why is everybody so bouncy all of a sudden? Those who have been reading in the works of Saul Bellow, Herbert Gold, Arthur Granit, Thomas Berger, Grace Paley, and others will know to what I am referring. Writing recently in the *Hudson Review,* Harvey Swados said that he saw developing "a nervous muscular prose perfectly suited to the exigencies of an age which seems at once appalling and ridiculous. These are metropolitan writers, most of them are Jewish, and they are specialists in a kind of prose-poetry that often depends for its effectiveness as much on how it is ordered, or how it looks on the printed page, as it does on what it is expressing. This is risky writing, . . ." Swados added, and perhaps it is in its very riskiness that we can discover some kind of explanation for it. I should like to compare two short descriptive passages, one from Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March,* the other from Gold's new novel, *Therefore Be Bold,* in the hope that the differences revealed will be educational.

As has been pointed out by numerous people before me, the language of *Augie March* is one that combines a literary complexity with a conversational ease, a language that joins the idiom of the academy with the idiom of the streets (not all streets—certain streets); the style is special, private, and energetic, and though occasionally unwieldly and indulgent, it generally, I believe, serves the narrative, and serves it brilliantly. Here for instance is a description of Grandma Lausch:

> With the [cigarette] holder in her dark little gums between which all her guile, malice, and command issued, she had her best inspirations of strategy. She was as wrinkled as an old paper bag, an autocrat, hard-shelled and jesuitical, a pouncy old hawk of a Bolshevik, her small ribboned gray feet immobile on the shoekit and stool Simon had made in the manual-training class, dingy old wool Winnie [the dog] whose bad smell filled the flat on the cushion beside her. If wit and discontent don't necessarily go together, it wasn't from the old woman that I learned it.

Herbert Gold's language has also been special, private, and energetic. One will notice in the following passage from *Therefore Be Bold* that here too the writer begins by recognizing a physical similarity between the character described

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and some unlikely object, and from there, as in Bellow's Grandma Lausch passage, attempts to move into a deeper, characterological description, to wind up, via the body, making a discovery about the soul. The character described is named Chuck Hastings.

> In some respects he resembled a mummy—the shriveled yellow skin, the hand and head too large for a wasted body, the bottomless eye sockets of thought beyond the Nile. But his agile Adam's apple and point-making finger made him less the Styx-swimmer dog-paddling toward Coptic limbos than a high school intellectual intimidating the navel-eyed little girl.

First I must say that the grammar itself has me baffled: ". . . bottomless eye sockets of thought beyond the Nile." Is the thought beyond the Nile, or are the eye sockets? What does it mean to be beyond the Nile anyway? The a-grammaticality of the sentence has little in common with the ironic inversion with which Bellow's description begins: "With the holder in her dark little gums between which all her guile, malice, and command issued. . . ." Bellow goes on to describe Grandma Lausch as "an autocrat," "hard-shelled," "jesuitical," "a pouncy old hawk of a Bolshevik"—imaginative terms certainly, but toughminded, exact, and not exhibitionistic. Of Gold's Chuck Hastings, however, we learn, "His agile Adam's-apple and point-making finger made him less the Styx-swimmer dog-paddling toward Coptic limbos etc. . . ." Is this language in the service of the narrative, or a kind of literary regression in the service of the ego? In a recent review of *Therefore Be Bold,* Granville Hicks quoted this very paragraph in praise of Gold's style. "This is high-pitched," Mr. Hicks admitted, "but the point is that Gold keeps it up and keeps it up." I take it that Mr. Hicks's sexual pun is not deliberate; nevertheless, it should remind us all that showmanship and passion are not, and never have been, one and the same. What we have here, it seems to me, is not so much stamina or good spirits, but reality taking a backseat to personality—and not the personality of the character described, but of the writer who is doing the describing. Bellow's description seems to arise out of a firm conviction on the part of the writer about the character: Grandma Lausch IS. Behind the description of Chuck Hastings there seems to me the conviction—or the desire for us to be convinced—of something else: Herbert Gold IS. I am! I am! In short: look at me, I'm writing.

Because Gold's work serves my purposes, let me say a word or two more about him. He is surely one of our most productive and most respected novelists, and yet he has begun to seem to me a writer in competition with his own fiction. Which is more interesting—my life or my work? His new book of stories, *Love and Like,* is not over when we have finished reading the last narrative. Instead we go on to read several more pages in which the author explains why and how he came to write each of the preceding stories. At the end of *Therefore Be Bold* we are given a long listing of the various cities in which Gold worked on this book, and the dates during which he was living or visiting in them. It is all very interesting if one is involved in tracing lost mail, but the point to be noted here is that how the fiction has come to be written is supposed to be nearly as interesting as what is written. Don't forget, ladies and gentlemen, that behind each and every story you have read here tonight is—me. For all Gold's delight with the things of this world—and I think that his prose, at its best, is the expression of that delight—there is also a good deal of delight in the work of his own hand. And, I think, with the hand itself.

USING A WRITER for one's own purposes is of course to be unfair to him (nearly as unfair as the gambit that admits to being unfair); I confess to this, however, and don't intend to hang a man for one crime. Nevertheless, Gold's ex-

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travagant prose, his confessional tone (the article about divorce; then the several prefaces and appendices about his own divorce—my ex-wife says this about me, etc.; then finally the story about divorce) —all of this seems to have meaning to me in terms of this separation I tried to describe earlier, the not-so-friendly relationship between the writer and the culture. In fact, it is paradoxical really, that the very prose style which, I take it, is supposed to jolt and surprise us, and thereby produce a new and sharper vision, turns back upon itself, and the real world is in fact veiled from us by this elaborate and self-conscious language-making. I suppose that in a way one can think of it as a sympathetic, or kinetic, response to the clamor and din of our mass culture, an attempt to beat the vulgar world at its own game. I am even willing to entertain this possibility. But it comes down finally to the same thing: not so much an attempt to understand the self, as to assert it.

I must say that I am not trying to sell selflessness. Rather, I am suggesting that this nervous muscular prose that Swados talks about may perhaps have to do with the unfriendliness between the self of the writer and the realities of the culture. The prose suits the age, Swados suggests, and I wonder if it does not suit it, in part, because it rejects it. The writer pushes before our eyes—it is in the very ordering of our sentences—personality, in all its separateness and specialness. Of course the mystery of personality is nothing less than the writer's ultimate concern; and certainly when the muscular prose is revelatory of character—as in *Augie March* —then it is to be appreciated; at its worst, however, as a form of literary onanism, it seriously curtails the fictional possibilities, and may perhaps be thought of, and sympathetically so, as a symptom of the writer's loss of the community as subject.

True, the bouncy style can be understood in other ways as well. It is not surprising that most of these writers Swados sees as its practitioners are Jewish. When writers who do not feel much of a connection to Lord Chesterfield begin to realize that they are under no real obligation to try and write like that distinguished old stylist, they are quite likely to go out and be bouncy. Also, there is the matter of the spoken language which these writers have heard, as our statesmen might put it, in the schools, in the homes, in the churches and the synagogues; I should even say that when the bouncy style is not an attempt to dazzle the reader, or one's self, but to incorporate into written prose the rhythms, the excitements, the nuances and emphases of urban speech, or immigrant speech, the result can sometimes be a language of new and rich emotional subtleties, with a kind of back-handed grace and irony all its own, as say the language of Mrs. Paley's book of stories, *The Little Disturbances of Man.*

BUT WHETHER the practitioner is Gold or Bellow or Paley, there is one more point to be made about bounciness, and that is that it is an expression of pleasure. One cannot deny that there is that in it. However, a question arises: if the world is as crooked and unreal as I think it is becoming, day by day; if one feels less and less power in the face of this unreality, day by day; if the inevitable end is destruction, if not of all life, then of much that is valuable and civilized in life—then why in God's name is the writer pleased? Why don't all of our fictional heroes wind up in institutions like Holden Caulfield, or suicides like Seymour Glass? Why is it, in fact, that so many of our fictional heroes —not just the heroes of Wouk and Weidman, but of Bellow, Gold, Styron, and others—wind up affirming life? For surely the air is thick these days with affirmation, and though we shall doubtless get this year our annual editorial from *Life* calling for affirmative novels, the plain and simple fact is that more and more books by serious writers seem to end on a note of celebration. Not just the tone is bouncy, but the moral is bouncy too. In *The Opti-*

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mist, another novel of Gold's, the hero, having taken his lumps, cries out at the conclusion, "More. More. More! More! More!" This is the book's last line. Curtis Harnack's novel, *The World of an Ancient Hand,* ends with the hero filled with "rapture and hope" and saying aloud, "I believe in God." And Saul Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King* is a book which is given over to celebrating the regeneration of a man's heart, feelings, blood, and general health. Of course it is of crucial importance, I think, that the regeneration of Henderson takes place in a world that is thoroughly and wholly imagined, *but does not really exist;* that is, it is not a part of that reality which we all read about and worry over—this is not the tumultuous Africa of the newspapers and the United Nations discussions that Eugene Henderson visits. There is nothing here of nationalism or riots or *apartheid.* But then, why should there be? There is the world, but there is also the self. And the self, when the writer turns upon it all his attention and talent, is revealed to be a remarkable thing. First off, it exists, it's real. *I am,* the self cries, and then, taking a nice long look, it adds, *and I am beautiful.*

At the conclusion of Bellow's book, the hero, Eugene Henderson, a big, sloppy millionaire, is returning to America, coming home from a trip to Africa where he has been plague-fighter, lion-tamer, and rainmaker; he is bringing back with him a real lion. Aboard the plane he befriends a small Persian boy, whose language he cannot understand. Still, when the plane lands at Newfoundland, Henderson takes the child in his arms and goes out onto the field. And then:

> Laps and laps I galloped around the shining and riveted body of the plane, behind the fuel trucks. Dark faces were looking from within. The great, beautiful propellers were still, all four of them. I guess I felt it was my turn now to move, and so went running—leaping, leaping, pounding, and tingling over the pure white lining of the gray Arctic silence.

And so we leave Henderson, a very happy man. Where? In the Arctic. This picture has stayed with me since I read the book a year or so ago: of a man who finds energy and joy in an imagined Africa, and celebrates it on an unpeopled, icebound vastness.

EARLIER I quoted from Styron's new novel, *Set This House on Fire.* Now Styron's book, like Bellow's, is also the story of the regeneration of a man, and too of an American who leaves his own country and goes abroad for a while to live. But where Henderson's world is removed from our own, not about riots or nationalism, Kinsolving, Styron's hero, inhabits a planet we immediately recognize. The book is drenched in details that twenty years from now will surely require footnotes to be thoroughly understood. The hero of the book is an American painter who has taken his family to live in a small town on the Amalfi coast. Cass Kinsolving detests America, and himself to boot. Throughout most of the book he is taunted and tempted and disgraced by Mason Flagg, a fellow countryman, rich, boyish, naive, licentious, indecent, and finally, cruel and stupid. Kinsolving, by way of his attachment to Flagg, spends most of the book choosing between living and dying, and at one point, in a language and tone that are characteristic, he says this, concerning his expatriation:

> . . . . the man I had come to Europe to escape [why he's] the man in all the car advertisements, you know, the young guy waving there—he looks so beautiful and educated and everything, and he's got it *made,* Penn State and a blonde there, and a smile as big as a billboard. And he's going places. I mean electronics. Politics. What they call communication. Advertising. Saleshood. Outer space. God only knows. And he's as ignorant as an Albanian peasant.

However, at the end of the book, for all his disgust with what the American public life does to a man's private life, Kinsolv-

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ing, like Henderson, has come back to America, having opted for existence. But the America that we find him in seems to me to be the America of his childhood, and, if only in a metaphoric way, of all our childhoods: he tells his story while he fishes from a boat in a Carolina stream. The affirmation at the conclusion is not as go-getting as Gold's "More! More!" nor as sublime as Harnack's, "I believe in God," nor as joyous as Henderson's romp on the Newfoundland airfield. "I wish I could tell you that I had found some belief, some rock . . ." Kinsolving says, "but to be truthful, you see, I can only tell you this: that as for being and nothingness, the only thing I did know was that to choose between them was simply to choose being . . ." Being. Living. Not where one lives or with whom one lives—but that one lives.

And now, alas, what does all of this add up to? It would certainly be to oversimplify the art of fiction, and the complex relationship between a man and his times, to ignore the crucial matters of individual talent, history, and character, to say that Bellow's book, or Styron's, or even Herbert Gold's prose style, arise naturally out of our distressing cultural and political predicament. However, that our communal predicament is a distressing one, is a fact that weighs upon the writer no less, and perhaps even more, than his neighbor—for to the writer the community is, properly, both his subject and his audience. And it may be that when the predicament produces in the writer not only feelings of disgust, rage, and melancholy, but impotence, too, he is apt to lose heart and finally, like his neighbor, turn to other matters, or to other worlds; or to the self, which may, in a variety of ways, become his subject, or even the impulse for his technique. What I have tried to point out is that the sheer fact of self, the vision of self as inviolable, powerful, and nervy, self as the only real thing in an unreal environment, that that vision has given to some writers joy, solace, and muscle. Certainly to have come through a holocaust in one piece, to have survived, is nothing to be made light of, and it is for that reason, say, that Styron's hero manages to engage our sympathies right down to the end. However, when survival itself becomes one's *raison d'être,* when one cannot choose but be ascetic, when the self can only be celebrated as it is excluded from society, or as it is exercised and admired in a fantastic one, we then, I think, do not have much reason to be cheery. Finally there is for me something hollow and unconvincing about Henderson up there on top of the world dancing around that airplane. Consequently, it is not with this image that I should like to conclude, but instead with the image that Ralph Ellison gives to us of his hero at the end of *Invisible Man.* For here too the hero is left with the simple stark fact of himself. He is as alone as a man can be. Not that he hasn't gone out into the world; he has gone out into it, and out into it, and out into it—but at the end he chooses to go underground, to live there and to wait. And it does not seem to him a cause for celebration either.

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HERBERT WEINER

THE DEAD HASIDIM: Part I

IN THE SMALL Jerusalem quarter of Mea Shearim—which houses the most intense concentration of Jewish Orthodoxy in the world—an unusual literary circle meets daily. Their discussions range over a large body of literature, but center mainly on some thirteen short stories which are read and reread with unfailing sighs of astonishment and admiration. The author's chair, empty now for a hundred and fifty years, stands nearby, intricately carved in black wood but somewhat marred by scratches and cracks. (At one time the chair had been broken into small pieces so that it could be smuggled over the borders of Russia and brought to Israel.) Before beginning their readings, the men—there are no women in this circle—intone a special prayer binding their souls to the "soul" of the dead author, Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav, who, they say, is then "present."

I had long been curious to see the followers of Rabbi Nachman—who are unique among the various Hasidic sects for never having replaced their founder with another Rebbe. Before his death, Nachman—a great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism—had said, "My light will glow till the days of the Messiah," and his disciples had interpreted this to mean that they would never need another spiritual leader to take his place. Today, one hundred and fifty years later, they still speak of Nachman in the present tense as their Rebbe, and are therefore known in Mea Shearim as the "Dead Hasidim."

One Saturday in Jerusalem last summer I explained all this to a group of American tourists I had been traveling with, and proposed that they accompany me on a visit to the synagogue of the Bratzlaver Hasidim that day. I had arranged for a guide, a seventeen-year-old member of the sect, named Arele. He stood waiting now outside the hotel nervously fingering earlocks which descended from under his round black hat to the shoulders of his frock coat. Seeing him there carefully averting his eyes from the female passers-by, I reminded the ladies that synagogues of Mea Shearim were male domains and their worshippers very sensitive to the requirements of female modesty in dress. The ladies reassured me: they had prepared themselves by putting on long-sleeved dresses and covering their hair with bandanas.

It was late afternoon when we joined Arele. The sunlight, so blinding during most of the summer day, was beginning to mellow and bring out gold and pink tints in the granite stone of Jerusalem's buildings. Passing on our way to Mea Shearim, we could see against the houses the outline of the wall of the Old City, ending to the

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right, near Mt. Zion, where the barren hills of the Judean desert became visible. Beyond, on the far side of the Jordan River, loomed the vague purple mass of Moab.

Arele saw me looking toward the desert. "The Rebbe says," he remarked in Yiddish, "that we should go to the desert often and talk out our hearts there with God. Late every Thursday night we do this, keeping at least twenty paces away from each other, as the Rebbe commands." It took me a moment to recollect that the Rebbe to whom Arele referred had been dead for a hundred and fifty years.

But where, I asked Arele, did he and his comrades find a desert to go to in Jerusalem? For that matter, were there any deserts in the heavily wooded plains and mountains of the Ukraine where Nachman had lived? The desert, Arele explained, could mean any uninhabited spot where it was possible to be alone. If necessary, you could make a "desert" for yourself even in a crowded room; or if you were ill in bed, all you had to do was pull a sheet over your face. The important thing was to set aside hours for solitary prayer. Arele told me of one Bratzlaver Hasid who created his daily solitude by rising every morning at three o'clock and standing alone in the hallway. "We can hear him groaning and sighing for hours," said Arele admiringly. But the best place to pray alone, Nachman had suggested, was among the grass and trees. " 'It is good to be pious among them,' the Rebbe says."

My tourist friends did not seem much struck by this bit of information. Solitary meditation and prayer in the presence of nature are not, after all, unusual religious exercises. But, as Arele knew, they represented a revolutionary departure from the classical traditions of Orthodox Judaism. Rabbinic Judaism fears the destructive or self-indulgent possibilities of solitary religiosity, and is equally suspicious of the attractions of nature. "He who, walking along a way, interrupts his studies to say, 'How beautiful is this tree, how lovely this valley,' " declares the Talmud, "forfeits his life."

But if Nachman's insistence on the necessity of solitary prayer among the grass and trees was at variance with classical Judaism, it was nevertheless directly in the tradition of his famous great-grandfather. Even as a child, Israel the son of Eliezer is said to have often fled the little schoolhouse where he was a pupil in order to meditate alone in the forest. Years later, when he had become known as the "Baal Shem"—a wonder-working rabbi—he was reputedly seen praying in the fields, and the sheep and the trees prayed along with him.

The Baal Shem's appreciation of nature was quite in keeping with the "peasant-like" appearance the legends attribute to him, and with his relatively positive attitude toward bodily appetites. His love of nature was simply one aspect of his whole impulse to release the springs of vitality and joy that had been dammed up by an ascetic ghetto Judaism. Nachman's feeling for nature was also intense. Once, after spending the night in a new house built of recently felled young trees, he complained of dreaming that he had fallen asleep in a cemetery surrounded by freshly slain corpses. But Nachman's relation to nature was far less simple than that of his great-grandfather. For all his constant talk about joy, the Bratzlaver Rebbe was drawn to an asceticism so morbid that it could express itself in a deliberate effort to eat without tasting the food in his mouth. And though Nachman spoke contemptuously of intellectualized religion, exalting a simple "cow-like faith" as the supreme virtue, he was himself bewilderingly complex in his own doctrine and character. But this was not the time to discuss the paradoxes of Rabbi Nachman's conception of nature with Arele, for we were now approaching Mea Shearim.

While Arele continued to entertain me with stories about Rabbi Nachman we

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strolled through the narrow cobblestone streets of Mea Shearim, where a Sabbath quiet prevailed. My American companions looked curiously at the men of the quarter, dressed in their long silken coats and large-brimmed fur-covered hats—costumes that seemed all the odder for the semi-tropical climate of Israel—and I could see that they were struck not only by the dress but also by something in the eyes and in the sedate gait of the passers-by, who were mindful of the law forbidding "gross" steps on the Sabbath.

We walked under a large banner strung across the street, admonishing in bold black letters, "Daughter of Israel, dress modestly, do not desecrate the Holy Law." There were other signs pasted on the walls of houses, some of them directed to the same theme and calling out anathemas upon women who violated religious law by "dressing like men or harlots." Other posters reviled the "atheistic" government of Israel and the treacherous religious parties which would have anything to do with "that cursed one," whose name the posters did not even deign to mention. The "cursed one," of course, was Ben Gurion.

I asked Arele if he was disturbed by the violent disgust expressed by the various religious parties not only for the government but for each other. "We are used to *machloket*—controversy," he smiled. "The Rebbe says, 'Out of the stones which are thrown against us we will build houses.' "

I couldn't tell whether Arele was thinking of current controversies or of the bitter hatred which existed for years between the followers of Rabbi Nachman and other Hasidic groups—a struggle which finally drove Nachman out of Bratzlav, the town where he had lived for many years and from which his followers took their name, to the village of Uman where he finally died.

Members of the various Hasidic sects could be seen in the streets of Mea Shearim, and the informed observer got a sense of the sharp diversity that belies the seemingly homogeneous surface of life in the community. The Hasidic groups differ greatly from each other in their customs and institutions, but they are differentiated primarily, of course, by their loyalty to a particular Rebbe. For Hasidim—and this is the point on which they have been severely criticized by the leading authorities of religious Judaism—everything centers on the Rebbe: he is their link to God, their counselor, and the living embodiment of the laws of the Torah. Because the Rebbe is so central to Hasidism, the Bratzlaver are an enigma even to other Hasidic groups. How can they be Hasidim without a living Rebbe? Arele was not bothered by the question. We would soon see, he told me, that there was nothing "dead" about the Bratzlaver Hasidim, or their Rebbe.

THE SYNAGOGUE TO which Arele was taking us, a rather large concrete structure that looked unfinished, stood only a few yards away from the Jordanian border. The ladies waited outside, while the men entered. The unpainted walls of the interior were bare except for a few cards, on each of which was a different Hebrew inscription, beginning with the word *shiviti,* from Psalm 16:8 ("I have placed the Lord always before me"). This is a traditional bit of synagogue decoration, but of special significance for Hasidim. The pseudepigraphic "will of the Baal Shem Tov" opens with an interpretation of the word *shiviti.* It derives, says the author, from the word *hishtachavut,* which connotes the quality of equanimity. He who can rise to the level of placing the Lord always before him will find that all other matters in the world are relatively unimportant: health and sickness, wealth and poverty, will become as "equal" when viewed from the perspective of the only true reality, God.

From the perspective of American tourists, however, there seemed very little equanimity in the mood of the worshippers

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here. Everyone was in motion, either nodding rhythmically at long tables, walking about, or rocking back and forth in a corner or beside a pillar. Each seemed to be worshipping on his own, some chanting, others mumbling, whispering, or shouting. An outburst of protracted clapping from one corner of the synagogue brought forth bewilderment to the eyes of the visitors. The general din was punctuated by deep groans and sighs. A sudden shriek as of pain came from a man rocking near a concrete pillar, but to the evident relief of the startled Americans, the man continued his prayer. "Why," said one tourist, looking around at the motley dress of the Hasidim, the unpainted walls of the synagogue, and the books lying in disarray on the rough wooden tables, "does holiness have to be associated with dirt?"

Suddenly the room became quiet and everyone rose for the Eighteen Benedictions which were murmured more or less in unison. Afterward, Arele came over. "You see how sweet prayer is here," he said happily. "A man starts talking with the Master of the Universe, and the One above asks him what he did this week, and what he didn't do. The man remembers, groans, asks God to forgive him and bring him close again. . . ." One of the tourists tugged at my sleeve. A lad had come into the synagogue with an urgent message from the ladies. We were to come out immediately, and we walked out. The ladies were still there, but gone was the good-natured tolerance and sportsmanship they had brought into Mea Shearim. One told what had happened. After standing outside a few minutes, someone in the group had suggested that they enter through a side door into a corner of the synagogue which was shut off from the rest of the room and was apparently meant for women. Once inside, another lady had decided there could be little harm in peeking in among the male worshippers so as at least to catch a glimpse of the famous chair of Rabbi Nachman. She had swung a door open, and it had been slammed back in her face by one of the Hasidim on the other side. She had opened it again, only to be brutally spat on by a Hasid. The women had had enough of the Orthodox male arrogance of Mea Shearim and wanted to leave immediately, they informed their husbands. For one moment their menfolk held back, then followed their wives, insulted and injured, into the more "civilized" area of Jerusalem. I was left alone with Arele, who had sensed what had happened.

"We have some *takiffin*—some strong ones here," he agreed, shaking his head. "But stay a bit more, soon we are going to study the writings of the Rebbe," he promised. "Have you ever heard prayer like this before, prayer with sweetness and *hitlahavut*—flame?"

ARELE COULD not have understood the discomfort and even repulsion that my American friends experienced in the synagogue, but their reaction was not so very different from that of the original opponents of the Hasidim, the Misnagdim, whose antagonism to the movement was partly occasioned by similar antics of Hasidim at prayer. In earlier days the Hasidim were even more exuberant, not only shouting and clapping in the synagogue, but occasionally turning cartwheels and performing other acrobatic feats in accordance with the Psalmist's phrase, "All my bones shall praise the Lord."

Nowadays the controversy between Hasidim and Misnagdim, which once split families and communities in Eastern Europe, has all but disappeared. Hasidim think nothing, for example, of attending a synagogue founded by followers of Rabbi Elijah, the Gaon of Vilna. In 1777, however, this Rabbi Elijah, leader of Lithuanian Jewry and a great Talmudic scholar, excommunicated all Hasidic groups with fiery anathemas, condemning them as illiterates, uprooters of the Law, and rebels against proper rabbinic leadership. In truth the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples never entertained any ideas about

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breaking the Law. Hasidism was indeed a rebellion, but not primarily against the ideals of learning which the rabbis represented, and still less against the Law. It was, rather, a demand for *penimiyut*—inwardness—an insistence that the deeds of a man were to be judged not only by their outer form, but by the feeling that accompanied them. For the Hasidim, external appearances were veils covering the inestimably more profound realities of existence.

In Hasidic doctrine, this "inner" component of reality is the true link between man and God, and therefore prayer—the effort to realize and reveal the hidden—became their specialty. Hasidic literature is replete with stories about men and women who cannot observe the proper forms of prayer, but whose inner fervor lifts their words to the Throne of God. Out of this emphasis on feeling, as against form, developed the shouting, the hand-clapping, the physical gyrations that so disturbed the tourists at the Bratzlaver synagogue.

MY FRIENDS had decided to return to the hotel. I wanted to stay on, however, since Arele had told me that the writings of the Rebbe would now be studied, after the prayers. When I stepped back into the synagogue, the congregation was already seated around a long wooden table, waiting while a black-bearded man wearing thick glasses leafed through the pages of a large folio. I could see at closer range now the faces which before had appeared like anonymous blurs behind their beards and under their large hats. They were strong faces, intelligent, most of them, often with a humorous glint in the eye. The black-bearded reader sighed twice and began to chant the text of a "Collection of Laws," compiled by Nathan, a pupil of Rabbi Nachman. I was both sorry and glad that my friends had left. The fading light of the Sabbath, the rapt expression on the faces of the listeners, and the gentle chanting of the reader combined to create an atmosphere which would have seemed to them much more spiritual than that produced by the hectic praying of the Hasidim. On the other hand, they probably would have been put off by the substance of the reading, which dealt with *nieuf,* a term that technically means adultery, but which in rabbinic literature is extended to any kind of illicit sexuality.

"The root of all sin," declared the passage we were studying, "is *nieuf,*" and it went on to discuss the danger of salacious talk and nocturnal emissions. At one point the reader paused to comment on the contemporary situation of religious Jews.

"When a person goes to war, he trains himself to avoid a wound or blow, but there can also be a blow to the sight, a wound in the soul resulting from what one sees. Today when one goes to a market place and sees the way women dress, one is exposed to such blows. Therefore, we have to prepare ourselves as carefully as those who go to war."

The image of Orthodox Jews fighting a battle was a fitting one. The inhabitants of Mea Shearim, after all, constituted an island of life and ideas surrounded by currents of secular behavior and morality which could easily inundate their community if they were not staunchly resisted. As for the subject of *nieuf,* a large part of the mystical teachings of the Cabbala, from which Hasidism draws so deeply, is concerned with sex. Like all earthly events, the sexual act is not only an allusion to cosmic processes but can also affect these processes. Consequently, a nocturnal emission was not to be considered unimportant. Rabbi Nachman had taught that a man is responsible for his thoughts no less than for his deeds, and just as the act of physical union must be preceded by certain kinds of thoughts, so must the act of emission also have its origin in thoughts—the wrong kind. Since a man's thoughts are stimulated by what he sees and does, he must strive to keep his eyes averted from women.

The reader finally left the subject of

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nieuf and went on to an entirely different theme—one also frequently discussed in the Cabbala—the connection between the "fruit and the shell." The point Rabbi Nachman wanted to make in this difficult passage was that those who looked upon the "yoke" of the 613 commandments as "externals" unnecessary to the "inner" spiritual life were making the mistake of trying to find a "fruit" which did not have a surrounding shell.

By the time he finished, the Sabbath had ended. But the Hasidim, in their reluctance to part with "the Queen," prolong the day by reciting the concluding prayers as late as possible. I told Arele I would have to go, and he insisted on walking back with me toward the center of Jerusalem. On the way we passed a black station wagon standing in a side street. "Do you know what that is?" Arele asked cheerfully. "That's the *Chevra Keddisha* —the hearse of the burial society. Every Saturday night they come around and take out all the bodies that have died during the Sabbath." This reminded him that on Thursday night the Bratzlaver were to visit the grave of King David on Mt. Zion and he invited me to come along. Bratzlaver Hasidim were always visiting the graves of Jewish saints, Arele said. "Once a year we hire a bus to make a tour of the graves of all the holy ones in Israel. Of course, in Europe we visited the grave of the Rebbe, as he commanded us. Do you know what he said? 'If you come to me and say prayers over my grave, I will stretch myself this way and that way, and pull you out by your very earlocks from the gates of hell.' "

When could I hear the famous stories of Rabbi Nachman? I asked.

"On Saturday mornings after prayer, but they are not just stories, you know, they are filled with great secrets and mysteries. Ach—the Rebbe was a *gevaldiger* man."

Leaving Arele, I was bemused by his last phrase. The Yiddish word *gevaldiger,* from the expletive *gevald,* is difficult to translate. The expletive is used in the famous cry of Rabbi Nachman: *"Gevald . . . Yiden—zeit eich nit miyayesh,"* which means something like, "For heaven's sake, Jews, don't despair!" Nachman was said to have stretched out his pronunciation of the *gevald,* to convey that his admonition applied not only to his immediate listeners but to future generations as well. *Gevaldiger* might be translated as formidable—even ferocious—and indeed Arele was right in so characterizing his Rebbe, for it is this kind of power I had sensed in the life and writings of Rabbi Nachman, strangely coupled with an exquisite spirituality. Ferocity and delicacy—these antithetical qualities could also be added to the long list of opposites which consorted together in the soul of the religious genius who founded the Bratzlaver sect.

HE WAS BORN in 1772 in the city of Medzibozh, where his famous great-grandfather had died. Even as a child, according to Martin Buber, Nachman was already engaged in "strenuous seeking and searching." He would fast for long periods, and he often visited the grave of the Baal Shem Tov, where he would lie for hours, praying. What Nachman was searching for through his fasting and his prayers was the sense of God's closeness which he knew had been vouchsafed to his great-grandfather but which he felt lacking in his own life and in the lives of the Hasidic leaders of his day.

At the age of fourteen, in accordance with local custom, he was married and settled in the village of his father-in-law. It was here he first began to express the feeling of deep communion with the growing things of the field that became a hallmark of his personality. And here, too, he found himself able for the first time to fulfill the Biblical commandment—so crucial to Hasidism—to serve the Lord in joy, despite the fact that he continued to suffer from bouts of severe depression. His ambitions also oscillated from extreme to ex-

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treme. At times, he expressed a strong yearning to wander about as a beggar from door to door. On other occasions he told the followers who began to gather about him that in every generation there was only one true Tsaddik*, one righteous man chosen by God to lead His people, and hinted that he was that Tsaddik, the "Moses-Messiah" of his day. (This was one of the reasons that other Hasidic leaders finally turned against him and drove him from Bratzlav.)

Nachman placed great emphasis on the importance of the Tsaddik, whom he sometimes called a Master of Prayer, or in one of his favorite images, the "Master of the Field."

There is a field
Where trees and plants
Of indescribable beauty grow,
Ineffably precious.
Fulfilled is the eye
That has once glimpsed it.

Trees, plants,
Holy Souls are they,
Growing, becoming.

Wait they must,
For the Master of the Field.
Only he can mend, replant.

Some can be mended
Only by another's death, another's deed.

He who would become Master of the blissful field
Strong must be, a Tsaddik, strong and wise,
Capable of mounting to the Highest. . . .

Another image Rabbi Nachman used for the Tsaddik was the "banker" who "exchanges" all bad qualities for good ones. He "finds the one point of light . . . the point of good and self-respect in each person which he must be conscious of in order to strengthen his belief in himself."

The true Tsaddik could be recognized by several characteristics, according to Rabbi Nachman.

FOR ONE THING, he must suffer great humiliations, and must be able to accept these humiliations in silence, for only then can he be brought into contact with the "root of his repentance" which is the "mending power" of his life. The Tsaddik has himself never sinned, but he is a constant *baal t'shuvah,* a penitent, who begs forgiveness for not having yet attained a higher spiritual level than he has already reached. To remain on a given level, no matter how exalted, is a sin. Thus the Tsaddik's life is one of perpetual restlessness and movement, demanding ever greater purity and holiness. But since it is only dissatisfaction with the place and condition in which he stands that tells him when a new effort is required, the "ascent" must always be preceded by a period of "falling" spirit. Every "descent" constitutes both a challenge and an opportunity.

But the "falls," the periods of "waning," cannot be utilized by a man who is chained by memories which remind him that his efforts to ascend in the past have failed. This sense of "oldness" is the prime instrument of Satan. It "deludes men into believing that everything goes on in the same order, and that a person is already old in his ways and cannot turn from them." The remedy for the sense of "oldness" comes through contact with the true "righteous leaders, who renew themselves like the phoenix, fulfilling the Scripture: 'And those who hope in the Lord renew strength.'" For if one will understand that he can meet the power and goodness of God in any place, he will then know that there is never any cause for despair. Indeed, when one feels most removed from God, one is at the point where contact can again be made. "By feeling the pain and the longing, the yearning to be again face to face with his Holy Presence, one already creates a bond which raises him infinitely high. . . . It is thus that the very descent into hell and the abyss of evil can become the ascent to the highest."

This, then, came to be Nachman's es-

* *Tsaddik* means "righteous one," but it was also used for any Hasidic Rebbe.

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sential teaching—his repeated insistence that the "troughs" of life are given us in order that we may from them achieve new soarings of the spirit, and his conviction that in this effort we are united with the deepest will of the universe, for even nature has its periods of "barrenness and flowering." As Nachman himself acknowledged, there was nothing original in his teaching. But his lifelong struggle with his own "fallings" gave it a force and a depth that his followers could still respond to, a century and a half after his death.

There is a kind of man, Nachman once said, whose soul must wax and wane like the moon. He himself was such a "moon" personality, fated forever to alternate between periods of contraction and growth. This experience of a "contraction" verging on self-annihilation manifested itself at its most extreme in a strange trip he took to the Holy Land in 1798. It was on the eve of the Passover festival that Nachman first hinted to his followers that he had determined to go. They tried to dissuade him, arguing that the way was long and dangerous (it was the time of the Napoleonic wars, and there was fighting in the Middle East), that there was no money for the journey, nor for the sustenance of his family while he was gone. When his wife heard of his decision, she sent one of their daughters to cry to her father, "Who will support us?"

"You will go to your in-laws," replied the Rebbe, who deeply loved his family. "Your older sister will be a servant, your younger sister will take charity, and your mother will be a cook. Everything in the house will I sell to get money for the journey." His answer was received with fresh outbursts of tears. All that Nachman would reply was, "It cannot be otherwise. The greatest part of me is already there—and according to the Law, the minority must follow the majority."

He considered this pilgrimage, he told his disciples, as necessary to his own soul as a journey to the Tsaddik was for an ordinary man. There may have been other unexpressed motives behind his decision, involving the ideas he had about himself as being the only true Tsaddik of his time. Did he perhaps believe that he was actually the Messiah and that his destiny could only be fulfilled in the land of Israel? If so, this would serve at least as a partial explanation for the strangeness of his behavior throughout the trip. In Constantinople he shocked the Jewish community by removing his outer rabbinic garb and running barefoot out into the streets where he played with little children at a game of "Cops and Robbers." On another occasion he disguised his identity to questioners. When after many harrowing incidents he finally arrived in Haifa, his first steps on the holy soil were accompanied by a "joy beyond description"; but a few hours later he announced to the Hasidim who had come to greet the great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, "I have accomplished that for which I came," and said that he wished to leave the Holy Land immediately. He even refused to visit the holy tombs or to journey to Jerusalem, and it was only the anguished pleading of the Palestine Hasidim that persuaded him to stay. He began traveling about the land, but still avoided Jerusalem. Despite the repeated requests of the Hasidim who flocked to meet him, he would not—or could not—teach. Once in Tiberias, he was about to reveal a great mystery concerning the phylacteries, but as he opened his mouth he began coughing blood, and was unable to go on. Before a year had passed, he left Palestine and set sail for home.

For some time after his return to Bratzlav, Nachman hardly ever mentioned his trip. Later, he said, "Everything I learned before my visit to the land of Israel was as nothing," and on another occasion, "Wherever I travel, I still travel to Israel." But soon after his return, Nachman's illness—probably consumption—became more severe. There were periods of

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"smallness" and "falling," but there were also new beginnings and ascents. Some ten years after the trip to Palestine, toward the very end of his life—the final falling before the ultimate ascent—Nachman's followers gathered gloomily around their bedridden leader who lay wincing in pain, coughing and struggling for breath. Nachman saw their dark, concerned faces. The words he spoke to them have been imaginatively re-created by later recorders of the Bratzlav Hasidic tradition.*

"Brothers, my companions, why do you stand in such black despair today? God is with you, cast anxiety out of your hearts. The Creator, be blessed, is good, His Name is good. Be happy and rejoice, and trust in the Lord. If you are troubled because of me, God forbid; did I not teach you to be strong? Jews must be strong, and believe in the good. It is forbidden for Jews to be melancholy. Why are your faces fallen, Bratzlaver? God forbid, have you forgotten in your hearts that we have a God, great, strong, and ancient of days. . . ." (Rabbi Nachman, it is said, sang out the word "ancient" in a sweet melody.)

"He, be blessed, looks down from above upon us, and leads us, and we must go after Him, we must set our feet in the path and go, and go, and go . . . to go and to go, this is the important thing," whispered the sick man. "He will show us the way, all ways lead to Him, be blessed, and the ways are many to Him, as it is written, *In all thy ways shall ye know Him.* We go toward Him in many ways—but not in the way of sadness. Brothers, comrades, why do you worry? God is with you—we have to be happy, to be happy. . . . Remember the high level of every Jew. A Jew with a wave of his hand here can move worlds over there, and if he waves his hand this way, he moves worlds that way. Blessed is man who is created in the Image and has been given control over all the worlds. He is greater even than the angels. If the eye could look into the mysteries of the body, of flesh and blood, it would see that upon every vein and muscle there hang worlds. . . . Why has the presence of joy fled from you? Are you Jews who worry about making a living, who sit and worry, God forbid, about how little money you have? I have always counselled you, Bratzlaver, not to carry in your hearts any fear about making a living. Make a living, or don't make a living—it is all the same. To make a living is good, but if not, it's better yet. And why do we need to care for making a living, when a piece of bread and onion can have the flavor of the Garden of Eden? Or do you fear lest you are not kosher Jews? I say to you that you are kosher Jews, all of you are pious and kosher, but you must be strong, you must be heroes for the battle with the evil impulse, you must hold your place, hold strong!"

Nachman was forty-one years old when he died in 1810—truly a *gevaldiger* man. But most amazing was the influence he continued to exert over his followers after his death. What is there about the Bratzlaver heritage which makes men with strong faces and keen eyes such as I had seen in the synagogue cling to a tradition which sets them apart even in their own Hasidic world? Part of the explanation, I had been told, could be found in a strange burst of creativity that overtook Nachman only a few years before his death, when he suddenly announced to his followers: "And now, I will begin to tell stories."

The stories that Rabbi Nachman told in those last years came to be regarded by his followers as "Torah," holy revelation, and are still read by them as a form of worship. The best time to hear them, Arele had said, was Saturday morning after prayers.

I determined to return to the Bratzlaver synagogue on the following Sabbath.

[*Part II will appear next month.*]

* The Hebrew version from which the free translation given here was made is to be found in one of Eliezer Steinman's Hasidic anthologies.

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WOMEN AT WORK

MIDGE DECTER

If you find yourselves troubled with too strong a competition from female workers, just prove yourselves worthy to be their husbands, marry them, provide good homes, and thus remove them from competition with you.—Horace Greeley to the New York Typographical Union No. 6.

ACCORDING TO the United States Department of Labor, by 1970 there will be 30,000,000 women in the American labor force. This number (predicated, of course, on a "normally" expanding economy) would represent an increase over the present of 25 per cent, that is, 6,000,000, as against a predicted increase of only 15 per cent for men in the same period. Now such figures stated flatly tend to conjure up an image as misleading as it is frightening to the popular imagination, an image of men and women coming to be less and less differentiated, elbowing one another for room in some kind of sexual and occupational jungle. Whereas the fact is that as yet women do not—nor does it seem likely that in the foreseeable future they will—have the same relation to salaried employment as do men: they do not upon leaving school enter the labor force and remain there permanently to support themselves and others, nor as a general rule define themselves by what they do, nor try to be as successful as possible. As it has become more common (to the point, now, of near universality), and as it has begun to assume a rather uniform, predictable pattern, female employment outside the home has become all the more casual and voluntary—and, what seems at first glance paradoxical, more than ever before dependent on the role of women as homemakers and mothers.

What the current statistics on the whole question of womanpower (a somewhat ambiguous though useful term for which we are indebted to studies by the National Manpower Council*) reveal about the crisis in the inner life of the American woman is not so certain as some psychiatrists and social workers would have us believe—for to judge by the literature in popular magazines and professional journals, American society is about to be confronted by nothing less than the eventual castration of its entire male population. The statistics do, however, tell us a good deal about critical changes in many of the American woman's practical plans and expectations. More than one-third of all women over fourteen years of age can be found at work either full or part time in any month; during a whole year the number is as high as two-fifths. A young girl in school will probably have had some kind of part-time working experience—summers or Saturdays or afternoons—by the time she has completed her studies, whether this means at the end of college or only high school. (And since research findings do not even include the ever widening occupation of baby-sitting, the figures above are undoubtedly far too modest.) Once out of school, the same young girl will as a

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* *Womanpower*, by Eli Ginsberg *et al.*, 1957; *Work in the Lives of Married Women*, Proceedings of a Conference on Womanpower, 1958; and *Women and Work in America*, by Robert W. Smuts, 1959; Columbia University Press.

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matter of course have a job until she marries. There is no longer any social prestige to be gained for the family making its way into the middle class, and certainly none for the family already entrenched there, by keeping its unmarried daughters at home: a society whose paragons are not the idle, but the active, rich liberates its aspiring members from this costly and uncongenial necessity. Nor by the present system of household economy is the adolescent girl of much use to her mother; there are not apt to be any real tasks, such as the care of several younger children, for her. So she will work, in a factory or an office or, if she is one of a small minority, in some profession, at least until she is married and often after that. It is becoming more and more likely that she will work until her first child is born.

All this will not take much time, though —probably only a little more than two years —for if she is anywhere near that compelling abstraction, "the average," she will be married by the age of twenty or twenty-one and will have had her last child by the age of twenty-six or so. The economists tell us that in the most prosperous period of the American woman's early married life, when she and her husband are jointly bringing in the family income, her patterns of consumption get set. She is well dressed and well entertained. All or part of her income may be used for the purpose of furnishing the house or buying such luxuries as television sets; some of it may be saved for the purchase of heavy household appliances at such time as she assumes the full role of housekeeper. Her husband's income will not reach its highest level until he is forty-five. Therefore just at the point when the family's minimum financial requirements suffer a sharp rise, that is, when there are little children to be housed, fed, dressed, and given medical care, a fair part of the family's income is cut off.

SOMEWHERE in her early or middle thirties our average woman sends her youngest child to school. This is generally the point when she will go back to work or busy herself with voluntary civic activities or both. One-third—more than seven and a half million—of the working women in America are mothers with children under eighteen (though it is important to keep in mind that this figure includes all women working, whether full or part time).

The picture just presented is naturally oversimplified. Among the working mothers of minor children is a notable number of widows, divorcees, and women separated from their husbands. These women are obliged to support themselves and in many cases, at least in part, their children. In 1946 one-fifth of all women workers in nonfarm families were found to be either the sole support of their families or the major wage earners.

But the trend in womanpower that seems most startling and is therefore in some way necessarily the most significant, regardless of its momentary ratio to an over-all statistic, is the one now bringing a number of married women with young children, though under no absolute economic pressure, to leave their homes and find jobs. The widow who suddenly finds herself with no means of support and sets about to insure her survival and that of her children, often with nothing but the crudest and poorest paid skills, has always existed and has continued to elicit the feeling of compassion and even admiration. The working spinster, too—and if she passes the age of thirty-five in America she will belong to only 7 per cent of the entire female population—is an age-old figure. The divorcee, subject to a certain lingering, vestigial disapproval, has again always been expected to work. Also, the existence of the driving career woman is a thing now generally taken for granted—far more generally, in fact, thanks to the ceaseless public discussion of "women's rights" and to such glamorizing image-makers as the movies, than her numbers would warrant.

Even if no more than their present number are ever caught in the trend, however, the fact that a certain percentage of young married mothers in America have come to seek employment, as part of a matter-of-course development of their lives, speaks of something irrevocably taking place in our society. However much this process may or may not be truly cause for alarm, it is being viewed with at least some measure of alarm by spokesmen for the public interest (except by economists like the members of the National Manpower Council, whose concern with the question is one of finding ways to tap all of America's available manpower

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resources). But the working wife is not, it seems safe to say, unless through some unimaginable social reversal, going to disappear; one might as profitably continue to be alarmed about the automobile.

I

WHAT IS IT that women *do* when they go to work? The answer to this question, if laid out in lists of occupational categories, would be: everything. Women, though not as physically strong as men, seem to be strong enough to manage most jobs in our technologically improved industry. The things that men alone, or that women alone, are considered fit to do, as anthropologists have long taught us in connection with primitive societies, is a matter determined quite simply by prejudice. World War II, in addition suddenly to setting millions of badly needed female hands to new tasks, created an enormous shift in American sexual-occupational prejudices. The huge accession of women into heavy industry during the manpower crisis of that period found, and left, them competent operators of assembly-line machinery and most of the tools and equipment pertaining thereto. After the war, many women left the factories, but the adjustment in personnel practices had been permanently effected. There were new jobs and new kinds of jobs for the returning veterans to take, or if they insisted on having back their old jobs, for the women they displaced.

Shifts in prejudice can work both ways. For instance, women can now be waitresses in all but the most elegant restaurants, while men, with the rapid decline in the number of domestic servants, can under the right selected conditions be housecleaners. Retail selling of everything but men's haberdashery and automobiles has within the last four or five decades come to be taken over almost completely by women, as have such things as employment agencies, bank cashiering, bookkeeping. Being involved in the canning and packaging of food, on the other hand, is now acceptable employment for men. Certain once exclusively feminine precincts of the textile mills have, as a result of the introduction of much heavier machinery, been invaded by men. And the examples multiply. One interesting handicap men seem to suffer in the competition between the sexes for jobs is that women are willing to regard anything open to them as proper, while men will often avoid work once classified as "women's," no matter how good the pay. The case comes to mind of certain sewing operations in the men's shirt-making industry, the machinery for which would be better operated by men but will not be touched by them.

But although there are some women doing nearly every kind of work in existence, and although the going prejudice has turned in their favor in certain formerly hostile industries, it is not yet correct to imagine that they roam freely over male territory. "Rosie the Riveter" may no longer be the heroine she was in the comic song in 1941; she is still no more likely than before to be advanced to foreman. Just as the girl behind the bank teller's cage will not be moved to the loan department, nor the girl joining the ranks of a large corporation be eligible for executive training. There are sound reasons for this, and therefore the situation will not easily change: employers hesitate to invest the time, and the money, required for training women to assume responsibilities which they will chuck for marriage, or to have a baby, or to answer the urgency of some other family need.

The work women can do may be redefined here and there, then, but in the main it will continue to be what it has always been. More jobs for women still largely means either the expansion of their peculiar areas of operation or the elevation to professional status of work that has been theirs all along. We have the simple evidence of our senses for this. Nurses, schoolteachers, librarians, laundry workers, sewing-machine operators, social case-workers will doubtless always be women; such jobs are merely translations either of basic household functions no longer performed in the home or of the American woman's idealized historic role as the tamer of rough men. (Men do of course teach school, but usually in high schools; male librarians are almost always to be found in the upstairs offices.)

Probably the single largest source of new employment for women is the filing cabinet. Offices in our vastly bureaucratized society pile on top of one another and spread from one end of the land to the other; and offices are places filled with "girls," often four or

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five to a man, typing, filing, keeping books —setting up records in a system unprecedentedly intent on recording itself. Strictly speaking, office work can be counted as something taken over from men. However, the sheer volume of inter- and intra-office communication by which today's corporations and institutions operate makes clerical work an industry totally different in kind from that of the days of the clerk and scrivener. Historians of the subject claim that the advent of the typewriter was responsible for the creation of the female secretary, one of the common notions about women as employees being that they have a much higher degree of manual dexterity than men and a good deal more patience with monotonous detail work. The typewriter may perhaps be a more naturally feminine tool, but certainly a no less reasonable explanation for the presence of women in offices is that the file has become a sort of combination closet and dust-bin, and filling it, a form of national housekeeping.

In factories the situation seems to be more complicated. There the work of men and women may be parts of the same process. But one has only to watch the "Help Wanted" sections of the newspapers (still duly segregated by sex) to see that, at least within a given geographic region, men and women will not be performing the same task together nor even any particular task interchangeably.

II

It NATURALLY makes an enormous difference to the fortunes of a female job aspirant whether she is white or colored, how much education she has, or how old she is—in this she obviously differs very little from a man. However, the very rhythm of her life as a woman will itself play a peculiar part in determining her age and the state of her education when she goes out to seek work. The relative weights of the three factors mentioned have changed very rapidly in the past few decades, so rapidly they are by now rather difficult to sort out in any fixed order of importance. As we are forever being told, age in this time of penicillin and lighter work loads no longer means what it once meant, for good *and* ill. The question of color and employment, certain to be with us and significant for decades and decades to come, is happily at least getting to be a tangled one, admitting of many more variables. Education therefore remains the most manageable factor in calling the turns of women's employment (even granting the dour prediction that soon virtually every adolescent in America will be going to college).

The education of young girls has certain essential characteristics. More girls than boys attend and are graduated from high school, and they are also better students there. Girls generally conform more closely to the school's demands on them, and they get, on the whole, better grades. There are powerful cultural influences which make it possible for them with honor to be nicer, quieter, better behaved in school than boys and so inevitably to achieve a superior grade average. Nevertheless, while girls are disproportionately represented in the top 50 per cent of any graduating class, boys predominate in the top 5 per cent. Again, when it comes to the so-called "hard" subjects—mathematics and the physical sciences—girls generally display a lesser gift, or a weaker mastery, or perhaps both. Following from this, their showing in college entrance examinations and scholarship competitions is significantly poorer than that of the boys they have been besting academically for years. Without entering any theoretical dispute about whether male intellectual superiority is divinely ordained or merely culturally determined, it is easy to see that the girls' expectations play a crucial part here. For one thing, many fewer girls are enrolled in academic or college preparatory courses (probably their number will increase considerably in the next few years); the majority still take commercial courses, planning to work, and largely unambitious about it, until they marry.

Nor is there any reason to suppose that of the girls who do go off to college more than a handful are powerfully motivated by the idea of a professional future, or in any case a career outside the traditional feminine professions. Attention to studies like physics and mathematics presupposes, in addition to what might be called a talent for them, ambitions in the direction of medicine, engineering, or science. Going to college for girls, far more than for boys, is still an as-

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sertion of economic privilege; it is after all a more interesting, and more carefree, way of whiling away the time before marriage than being shut away in the filing rooms and typing pools of large corporations. And the young men one meets there are in the long run more eligible. A college degree does entitle a girl to a better job: she can, if she wishes or needs, be a schoolteacher or social worker or nurse (though it comes as something of a shock to be reminded how recent, and for many regions of the United States how vaguely enforced, is the requirement of a college education for the pursuit of these professions). The most telling importance of a degree for girls, even today, however, is that it attaches its possessors to a higher and wider standard of living.

If one considers that the lengthening of years of education in this country has been accompanied not by a commensurate delay in, but rather a hastening of, marriage, the bald statistics of female education take on a rather different meaning than might have been attributed to them. Spiritually they mean that girls take their intellectual achievements and broadened perspectives back into the home, there to ferment some new kind of family existence. While practically, by a somewhat ironic twist, the statistics mean that a majority of the women who will be entering the labor force will be doing so with very little specialized training, few skills, and a considerable lapse of time since even these skills have been used.

EDUCATORS ARE beginning to show a good deal of concern about such problems. The National Manpower Council, for instance, at its conference on womanpower held at Arden House in October 1957 devoted a session to the question of secondary education. The entire discussion concerned itself with suggestions about how better to prepare American girls for the work they will almost inevitably be doing some day. A new form of vocational guidance in high school was suggested, as was the setting up of special courses to keep non-working young married women in training. On the level of suggestions like these, it is hard to believe that any plan or series of plans can aid in overcoming the situation. Perhaps some, or even a large number, of girls can be effectively encouraged to allow ahead for the new pattern of their lives; which may or may not involve simply more education for them—for some kinds of training, e.g., stenography and nursing, can be laid away for a time and with a little "brushing up" be put to use again, and some cannot. Certainly for a woman in her thirties with growing children to *begin* training for something would involve a psychological wrench, really a form of humiliation, that only the most pressing will to make something of herself could justify. The real difficulty in organizing their training for work seems to be that, in the very teeth of their emancipation and hard-won freedom, girls go on dreaming of being married and loved and happy, in fact, more than girls have ever done before.

A woman must still live where her husband's job takes her, and live largely in the style that his work imposes. These things have nothing to do with the "inequality" of women or with prejudices against them, and they have almost everything to do with the kind of opportunities a woman will find for work. If, for instance, she lives in a mining town in Pennsylvania, or a steel town in Indiana, chances are she will not be able to find a job. If her family is settled in a suburb some distance from the city, her choice will be limited to what is available without sacrificing too much precious household time to travel.

It does not promise to be the case, either, that wherever and whenever possible the women who have careers will pursue them straight through, stopping to have children for only as long as is medically required. Though the number of working women with children under eighteen is growing, the number with children under six is getting proportionately smaller. A mother's care for her infants, precisely to the extent that it is being threatened by other possibilities, has been elevated from an unconscious process to an overwhelming national piety. There are of course some women, those with a profound commitment to the nature of the work they do and the success it brings them, who make arrangements for their child-bearing years that permit them to continue working; but they are too few and too special to be considered here. It is enough to note that among the rest of the group who make up the figure for working mothers of pre-school infants—and because of higher rates of

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poverty, desertion, or non-support by husbands, its majority is Negro—any improvement in economic condition brings with it a decline in their number.

For employers of women, their pattern of work poses two related problems. First, as the number of women in their employ increases so does the average age. As of 1960, according to the Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, the average age of the working woman was forty. Although because of Social Security benefits the number of working women over sixty-five (these, again, are largely Negro) has sharply declined from, say, 1890, the percentage of those between the ages of forty-five and sixty-five has risen during the same period from a little over 10 per cent to nearly 40 per cent. Second, the proportion of women who do not absolutely need to earn their living but are merely trying to supplement the family income is also on the increase.

Most employers would seem to have mixed feelings about these problems. Mature women in many ways make better employees. They tend to be more responsible, less skittish, and less disproportionately ambitious. On the other hand, they are also a good deal harder to handle. Unaccustomed as most of them have been for so many years of their lives, or perhaps for all, to conditions in the world of work, they are both touchy and rigid about necessary changes of pace or all the countless minor emergencies that can occur on the job. And while women who are neither totally dependent on their jobs nor vitally concerned about advancing themselves make a useful manpower cushion—a labor supply that can be taken on and let off rather casually—they are by the same token given to a troublesome amount of absenteeism and various other forms of unreliability.

Perhaps the radically shortened work week promised for America's future will shift the entire question of women's employment into another realm. But for the present the situation seems to hinge on the following proposition: more women marry, and marry younger, in the United States than any other Western country; and since a married woman's first obligation is to her family, she is unable, and unwilling, to make a man's commitment to work. If she must stay off the job when her children are ill, or leave it altogether when, for instance, her husband is transferred to another place, the terms of her employment are bound to be not so much "unequal" to a man's as different in kind. Assuming that some of the economists are right, and America can indefinitely expand its exploitation of manpower resources, the American economy must make its adjustment to a new quality, as well as a new source, of labor.

III

WHEN THE individual mother in her middle thirties waves her youngest child off down the road on the school bus and decides that it is time to look for a job, she will offer various explanations for her decision. She will say that there are accumulated debts to be paid or that she wants to find better housing in a better neighborhood; or she will cite all the "extras"—orthodontia, music lessions, summer camping—that she means her children to have and that her husband's present income cannot provide; or she will simply announce that time now lies heavy on her hands, which is to say, that she wants to get out of the house. If she is like most people, one crucial explanation for her behavior will probably not even occur to her: namely, that she is part of a national trend, that she is going to work because her culture now enables her to take for granted the possibility of doing so.

In any case, when and if she finds an acceptable job, she will be putting herself and her family under a great deal of new physical and moral pressure. She may work only part time, during the morning or a couple of days a week, in which case her life and the life of those around her must become a carefully timed affair, with household chores, marketing, laundry, meals, etc., on a close and fixed schedule. A good part of her daily existence will be governed by the clock, and run-of-the-mill difficulties, like sniffles or bad temper or an automobile that needs repairing, will become major problems requiring immediate solutions. If she gets a full-time job, she will have to find someone to help her with all or part of her housekeeping, which is expensive and means the family's adjustment to a new personality in its midst. She will be apt to demand more help from

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her husband and more responsible cooperation from her children. She will come home tired and in moods imposed by events outside her home to which her family will be asked to be sensitive.

The money she can make under such circumstances may or may not seem worth the trouble. As we have seen, she will not except in a rare case find particularly lucrative work. And in addition to the strain and inconvenience, her expenses will increase enormously. Quick shopping, for easy-to-prepare or packaged or frozen foods, can add as much as 10–15 per cent to her food bills. She will need a larger and a better wardrobe. Lunches and transportation for her will now have to be included in the family budget. If she has a maid or baby-sitter to look after the children, even only part of the time, a sizeable portion of her salary will be committed before she has taken it out of its envelope. And the family income taxes will go up, while most of her working expenses are not deductible.

Chances are, then, it is precisely those outlays required for her to be able to work that are the very extras and luxuries she is seeking with her new income: new clothes, meals in restaurants, certain labor-saving devices, help with the housekeeping, the possibility of giving her children over for at least part of the day to someone else's care. She will be paying her way, as it were, for a bit of freedom from a purely domestic existence.

THE QUESTION of why it is that the American women can find it preferable to do any amount of routine drudgery on some assembly line or behind some sales counter rather than involve herself in all the physical details of caring for her husband and children has become a matter of grave concern to observers of American society—and even to herself. For her new pattern of living is undoubtedly plunging this country into a domestic crisis of major proportions, from which it will emerge with a good number of traditional family arrangements no longer intact. One of the reasons offered for her feeling so impelled to get out of the house is that the terms of her culture no longer place sufficient value on what she does there; and this is surely true, in part. The girl in school is being educated to believe herself a "person," someone with full responsibility for the affairs of her country, her world, the quality of her life, and someone fully obliged to prepare herself to meet it.

But though in some ways her functions as wife and mother are no longer given their proper weight, in others they are given too much. If her husband grumbles that she should be content to look after him, his home, and his children, and if on his behalf the social experts are inclined to regret the vanishing woman of yesteryear—they might both be reminded that our young mother is also forced to live up to entirely new demands. The number of hours she must devote to her children's welfare may be shortened, thanks to automatic washing machines, store clothes, canned foods, but she is to an extent undreamed-of by her own mother held accountable for every aspect of their psychological and emotional development. She has been made aware that, whether she stays at home with them or not, her children's habits, pleasures, and feelings are given over directly into her keeping. Similarly with her husband: she has been taught to believe in both his right to personal happiness and the dependence of such happiness on her own success or failure to provide it. Insofar as she is a "good" wife, whether she spends hours preparing her husband's meals or throws them together from the food freezer, she is his companion. She must be at least conversant with what interests him; she must be attractive to him; she must be his partner in sex. American families, falling apart though they be, are not nearly such natural and casual arrangements for women as they once were. And the houses in which they dwell have become peculiarly crowded, intimate places.

In addition, the young woman today is a creature plagued with choices—and it is choice, not the lack of it, that breeds restlessness. Much has already been said on the subject of choice and love in contemporary marriage. We know that such decisions on the part of young girls or boys as whom do I love, whom should I marry, are never altogether genuine, that is, never independent of the influence on their attitudes of the world all around them; nevertheless the very illusion of having chosen freely lends its quality to their lives. In this connection,

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not nearly enough has been understood about the meaning of birth control for the new condition of women. That they now choose to be mothers, and when to do so, for all its very great physical benefit has created a disruption in the natural order of their lives that perhaps cannot yet be measured. When babies were inevitable—unasked for, unlooked for, and totally expected—so too was the way of life that followed from them. In their study of the use of contraception in the working class,* Lee Rainwater and Karol Kane Weinstein point out that most lower-class women cannot be interested in birth control because they regard sex as their husbands' business and therefore the making of babies as not their responsibility. Though these women dread the arrival of more children, and know very well that they will be the ones to suffer most concretely from it, they carefully keep themselves off the one hook that catches their middle-class sisters: life is decided for them. They do not have to be good mothers, good wives; they do not *have to be* anything. And they rarely go to work—though food and shelter often have to be provided by welfare agencies.

The middle-class woman, however, particularly if she has had any education (and by now all have), will feel she is choosing a job, a mate, a style of life, to have children, how many to have, whether or not to nurse them, how to bring them up. As soon as she reaches the first relaxation in pressure, she often discovers she doesn't know what to do with herself; so she looks for some definite employment.

WHILE THE JOB she finds will be definite, thus telling her how her life must be organized, it will not be defining. Her husband is a steam-fitter, a lathe-turner, a lawyer, or an engineer; she, unless she is an exception of some kind, will be still a woman, a wife and mother, who happens to be doing *x*, *y*, or *z*.

Many working women complain of this, complain they are not taken seriously, are discriminated against. And a few of them have a right to such a complaint, for of course there is still a good deal of prejudice against women in the men's world. A woman who does the same work as a man for less pay—and there are some, though many fewer than there once were—is a victim of it. A professional woman with the same training and qualifications as a man, say an engineer or chemist, who must take an inferior job is being, to say the least, unfairly treated. But there is a good deal more involved in commitment to work than seriousness or talent or even educational qualification. It is easy to forget that the dedicated career woman is doing something much more than sloughing off the special responsibilities and burdens of her womanliness: she is also staking her pride, her vanity, her very ego on the great fortune-wheel of success in America, just as a man does. She is, in short, risking failure. If women suffer the disadvantage of being deprived of opportunities to hold the best jobs on the highest echelons, this very circumstance grows out of their one irrevocable privilege: they always have a place of retreat when failure threatens—this is not what they really are, what they really do. The men who on their side complain that if women are to become a permanent part of the labor force they will soon become full competitors, might remind themselves that regardless of what women think they think, their ultimate feminine advantage is one not easily given up in the dark jungle of work.

* *And the poor get children,* by Lee Rainwater assisted by Karol Kane Weinstein. Quadrangle Books, Inc., 190 pp., $2.95.

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BY THE LIGHT OF THE SILVERY SCREEN

WALLACE MARKFIELD

THE INTELLECTUAL who turns film critic is letting himself in for a rough time. Despite the hundreds upon hundreds of books written about movies, he is still left with no solidly established precedents or precursors to defy or demolish, no unassailable terms, standards, and values that can serve as springboard for his own work; indeed, even at this late date he must set about proving, as though for the first time, that movies belong to the area of "legitimate" art and deserve serious attention.

Even worse, he is confronted by the maddening task of devising a prose style born from and suited only to his subject, a way of writing about, say, the Western, that would not serve equally well for *The Wasteland.* No wonder, then, that he generally lapses into the easy jargon of psychoanalysis and sociology or the ponderous mishmash of the cinéastes who talk of "visual-spatial continuums," "the paradigmatic character of the avant-garde film," "psycho-physical correspondences." In the course of his development—if there is a development—he tends to scorn the present, withdrawing to the lost childhood of the movies, to a sentimental memory of golden, pre-sound days when the camera moved, when Keaton and Langdon and Arbuckle gave birth to laughter, and Griffith and Stroheim walked large upon the earth. Since then, he tells us, something has gone wrong, horribly wrong. Never mind where or what; it is enough, simply, to assert his disgust.

And this he does, growing increasingly savage and vindictive with each *Ben Hur,* blaming Hollywood, then the mass audience, then the middlebrow, then the pressure groups, then back full circle to Hollywood again. He comes to find at least a little good in the worst of the imports, while the best American movies serve him as negative commentaries on the state of our country and our culture. Those few intransigents—i.e., James Agee, Manny Farber, William Poster—who sought a way out of the prevailing critical gloom, frantically casting about for something to praise in the Hollywood-style movie and movie-maker, were no better off; all the love they lavished on the face of Frances Dee, the miming of Mickey Rooney, and the odd-ball antics of John Huston seem now only a kind of whistling in the dark, revealing, as Pauline Kael has said, "a great deal about themselves but very little about films."

Withal, books on the movies manage somehow to get written. (How they get published is another matter; most are remaindered before the ink is decently dry.) And to me, at any rate, the worst of them, like the worst of movies, has a certain morbid fascination. I offer this most recent pair—*Theory of Film,** by Siegfried Kracauer, and *The Three Faces of the Film,*† by Parker Tyler—as cases in point.

In the *Theory of Film,* Siegfried Kracauer sets about proving, once and for all, that (1) movies are an art, and (2) that they differ radically from other arts. To his

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* Oxford University Press, 364 pp., $10.00.
† Thomas Yoseloff, 150 pp., $6.50.

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task, Dr. Kracauer brings an impressive set of credentials (author of *From Caligari to Hitler,* a host of articles in the literary and film quarterlies, several years at the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, etc.), a passion for pure scholarship (thirty-seven solid pages of notes, with authorities ranging from Arnheim, R. to Zinnemann, F.), a tendency to set down a far-off image as though it were one of the eternal verities (Groucho Marx is "an eruptive monad in the middle of self-created anarchy"), and a marvelous aliveness (sometimes) to just about everything that crosses the light of the screen.

For Dr. Kracauer, "the hunting ground of the motion picture camera is the external world expanding in all directions." Its natural prey are those sights and spectacles and moments so fugitive and impermanent as to elude observation—i.e., streets, roads, masses of people, the turning of wheels, the shadow on a wall, the ripple of a single leaf. Mercilessly, the camera fastens on the phenomena of everyday life till they are made to yield up a new reality, a "camera reality" so astonishing and momentous that it forces us to relearn our notions of the world and our relation to things. Thus, the human face seen under close-up is no longer simply a face. We get, instead, "new and unsuspected formations of matter; skin textures are reminiscent of aerial photographs, eyes turn into lakes or volcanic craters." Somehow and at any cost the camera must fill the screen, if only with the dirt underfoot or the waste we leave behind. It will exalt a sewer grating into a symbol of the metropolis and the litter in an empty subway car into an eloquent statement on the human condition.

DR. KRACAUER also has many wonderful perceptions about dialogue and sound and music—although he permits too many stretches like: "There are, then, two pairs of alternatives: synchronism-asynchronism; parallelism-counterpoint. Yet these two pairs do not assert themselves independently of each other. Rather, they are invariably interlinked in such a way that one alternative of either pair fuses with one of the other. . . ."

Such passages, though, contain ideas, and the ideas usually turn out to merit the required six or eight readings. (He believes, for example, that film music goes by special rules of its own, that the farther it draws us from the images on the screen the more it reveals of the greater life from which it issues; specifically, the child-murderer's reedy, compulsive little whistle in *M* has a thousand times the evocative power of the tom-tom-like *High Noon* ballad.) But Dr. Kracauer, alas, is a man with a thesis, doggedly intent on showing, says the dust jacket, how movies reflect "the condition of modern man, the moral temper of our society." Nothing will stand in the way of his high purpose: if data don't conform to thesis, so much the worse for data; if unity is demanded, unity will be imposed, no matter how artificial; if ideas run a little dry, there is always the obvious to be labored.

One of his consistently irritating habits is to set down a few modest truths and then, as though fearful of saying something new and dangerous, to smother them with the first handy banality. (He has a superb eye, incidentally, for picking the worst passages from the best writers; even James Agee, allotted two meager quotes, comes out tired, thin, and trite.) To illustrate, Dr. Kracauer spends a longish chapter dealing with the question of how stage actor and screen actor differ from each other. His answer is that the stage actor is the hub of the play, the carrier of all its meaning, while the screen actor is only "raw material" employed to represent the species rather than the individual: ". . . the film actor must act as if he did not act at all but were a real-life person caught in the act by the camera. He must seem to *be* his character. He is in a sense a photographer's model."

Again, nothing sensational here; a mild uh huh and you plod ahead, looking for the liberating insight or aperçu toward which Dr. Kracauer seems to be laboring and laboring. Instead, six-and-a-half pages of elaborate system-building and meticulous annotation peter off into "The typical Hollywood star . . . acts out a standing character identical with his own or at least developed from it, frequently with the aid of make-up and publicity experts." A little later, Dr. Kracauer ends his accolades to Rossellini and De Sica's canny handling of non-professional actors on this note of caution: "But one should keep in mind that the Italians are blessed with mimetic gifts and have a knack of expressive gesture." (I always did like that Henry Armetta!) And the very

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next line brings the comment that ". . . while producing *The Men* director Fred Zinneman found that people who have undergone a powerful emotional experience are particularly fit to reenact themselves."

Such hedgings and restraints are seldom in evidence when Dr. Kracauer goes to work on specific movies. John Ford's *The Informer* is curtly dismissed because it doesn't "really record city nature," but his *Grapes of Wrath*—in every way a lesser work—is hailed as "a classic of the screen"; the schmaltz-drenched *One Hundred Men and a Girl* gets a loving paragraph for its "aesthetic gratifications," but the tight, sinewy, and inventive *Forty-second Street* is brushed off with a chilly little mention; Fred Niblo's chariot race sequence in *Ben Hur* is "superb" cinema, but Eisenstein's ice battle in *Alexander Nevsky* is "rather lifeless."

Once out to make a point, Dr. Kracauer has no qualms about treating the lowest-grade celluloid with solemn respect and downright mawkishness. Apropos of *Jungle Patrol,* a combat pilot quickie which any Times Square bug house audience would laugh off the screen, we read:

> This film culminates in a sequence of terrific air fights which, however, are not seen at all. What we do see instead is a loudspeaker in the operations hut hooked in to the planes' inter-coms. As the ill-fated fights take their course, different voices which seem to come from nowhere flow out of the radio set, forming an endless sound strip. To be sure, we grasp the tragic implications of their blurred messages. But this is not the whole story they are telling us. Rather, the gist of it is the constant mutter itself, the fabric woven by voice after voice. In the process of unfolding, it sensitizes us to the influences of space and matter and their share in the individual destinies.

Apart from the fact that this is about as original a bit of business as the use of exfoliating calendar leaves to denote the passing of time, and that those "blurred messages" are on a par with "You-can't-send-a-kid-up-in-a-crate-like-that!" I think Dr. Kracauer's real trouble arises out of a general mistrust of simple explanations. Thus, it apparently never occurs to him that *Jungle Patrol* is a low-budget item and that the showing of an air battle, even with the aid of trick photography and scale models, costs a good deal more than the taping of a few voices. Similarly, if *Bicycle Thief, La Strada,* and *Cabiria* are "soaked in the street world," doesn't economics divulge as much as aesthetics? And the Western hero—is he an "incarnation of *Little David,*" "a potential victim," "a pitiable figure," or just a man whose gun and horse are endlessly fascinating camera staples?

Dr. Kracauer winds up with a mournful portrait of lost modern man drifting in an ideologically shelterless void, alienated from other men, from himself, and from physical reality. What he needs, insists Dr. Kracauer, summoning Dewey, Freud, Marx, Toynbee, Mumford, etc. as witnesses, is to "seize the concrete world and shake hands with it." And of all the arts, only the film will lead him out of the forest of abstraction and set him "on paths that wind through the thicket of things."

And once through this thicket, where ends the path? What has Dr. Kracauer been driving at all along with his metaphysics and depth psychology? The answer: a "rapprochement between the peoples of the world," "a common life of mankind on earth." Lest we have any doubts about the extent of his vision or the depth of his purpose, he resolves these at the end by a heartfelt endorsement of what one New York *Times* reader had to say about *Arapajito:* "What seems to me remarkable is that you see this story happening in [India] and see these faces with their exotic beauty and still feel that the same thing is happening every day somewhere in Manhattan, Brooklyn or the Bronx."

NO MATTER what you might say about Dr. Kracauer, it's only fair to concede that his discussion of this or that movie generally imparts some sense at least of what actually took place on the screen. For Parker Tyler, a movie is only the goad that sends him into a frenzy of free association; the real drama is taking place in his unconscious. Or, as Paul Goodman puts it in his blurb for *The Three Faces of the Film:* "Parker Tyler reacting to a Hollywood movie is a better movie than they ever dreamed of there."

From what I'm able to make out, Mr.

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Tyler employs three basic approaches in criticism. These are (1) the juxtaposition of things that don't belong together, (2) the laying down of laws and propositions as difficult to affirm as they are to deny, and (3) the celebration of the chi-chi and the brushing-off of the conventional. A few random samplings.

Juxtaposition: Writing on documentary and semi-documentary films, Mr. Tyler, within the confines of a single page, trots out Zola, Flaubert, Tolstoy's *War and Peace,* Arnold Bennett's *The Grand Babylon Hotel,* Jules Romains' *Men of Good Will* ("a great part of which is an urban portrait corresponding to Eisenstein's rural portrait of Mexico"), Flaherty's *Nanook,* Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past, The March of Time, The House on 92nd St.,* and *13 rue Madeleine.* Then, in apparent desperation, he overflows into a footnote: ". . . two postwar films naming streets in their titles . . . were *It Happened on Fifth Avenue* and *Miracle on 34th St.*"

Laws and Propositions: "The frantic drive of Hollywood cameras to 'eat up' space on their recurrent trips to the moon directly reflects the general Hollywood conception of space as a jungle, a *chaos,* whether void or occupied." "To get more people into the theaters . . . the movies have been overreaching stage and novel to call upon the dynamic sensations of kinesthesia through the third-dimension effect and the illusion of being surrounded by the area of vision . . . ." (Roughly translated, screens are getting bigger all the time.) "The sum of [the] narratives in *Rashomon* rests on the elements of the tragedy in which all agree: one raped, one was raped, one killed, one was killed." (With that I'll go along.)

Chi-chi and Conventional: You can hunt high and low before you'll find a kind word for anything that's come out of Hollywood since *Greed* and *Broken Blossoms.* In fact, the only American movie with which Mr. Tyler deals at any length is *Sunset Boulevard,* where he never quite forgives Billy Wilder for not being Jean Cocteau; the others get neat little flash cards—Sex, Sadism, or Sadistic Sex. But turn him loose on the experimental squibbles of a Maya Deren and he begins to drip dithyrambs: "lyrically simple," "structurally strong," "transmuted into glory," "a triumphant sense of dance flow," "a parable of the individual's integrity in an unchanging environment."

All three critical approaches converge on the gimmicky British shocker *Dead of Night,* which had to do with murder and mayhem in a British manor house, said murder and mayhem turning out to be really the hero's dream, said dream turning out to be really a detail by detail forecast of coming events. Such a movie is, of course, Mr. Tyler's meat; for this exegesis he doesn't even pretend to bother with such philistine considerations as photography, direction, and acting. He concentrates, instead, on the "archetypal" moviegoer, on "Mr. Average Citizen" who, like *Dead of Night's* hero, gets into his car and drives, if not to a manor house at least to a movie house, where events on the screen, as observed by Mr. Tyler, parallel and parody his private daydreams.

If this method is to fall within the realm of good movie criticism—or movie criticism at all—it must be used delicately and sparingly and tied hard and fast to the movie's formal, surface content. Unfortunately, in Mr. Tyler's hands the method is converted into a vehicle for the wildest and weirdest observations you're ever likely to encounter this side of a mescaline trance. Take *Dead of Night's* ventriloquist episode. Since it involves dubbing-in, since dubbing-in is "the constant factor of projection, common to the mechanism of mind and film," Mr. Tyler takes the next logical step. "Is it not possible," he speculates, "for neurotic homosexuals to project their unconscious desires arbitrarily onto others, especially an actor or actress seen in the movies?" (Yes, but I've noticed the same tendency among quite a few heterosexuals.) The screen murder of a psychiatrist gives him even less trouble. "It is easy to imagine that Mr. Average Citizen, faithful movie-goer, can . . . overcome a psychiatrist, if necessary, by strangling him." And so forth, till the windup when Mr. Tyler does a few tricky turns with Frankenstein's monster, Danny Kaye, and Rita Hayworth.

Some years back S. J. Perelman claimed that "when it comes to rococo, it's Manny Farber two to one." Personally, my money's on Parker Tyler.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Problems of Urban Renewal

To the Editor of Commentary:

In an excellent and comprehensive article "Urban Renewal—For Whom?" [January], Staughton Lynd . . . [explains that] public housing projects may create serious social problems, due to their allegedly mistaken ideological basis and poor administration. Nevertheless, he concludes: "Only public housing can make possible the relocation which can make possible slum clearance." . . .

The primary obstacle [to public housing] has been the lack of sufficient suitably located vacant land. . . . Vacant land is either too close to the downtown area and consequently worth too much to use for non-taxpaying housing, or it is located in districts where Aldermen or Borough Presidents can successfully block the entry of poor (and therefore minority) families, or it lies beyond municipal boundaries altogether. . . . There are alternative relocation solutions. A program to help accelerate the "filtering down" of older (and in New York, rent-controlled) apartments to low-income groups might be spurred by increased construction of middle-income housing requiring only a partial subsidy. . . .

I also doubt that the public housing solution is economically feasible today. . . . I do not think Mr. Lynd is helping matters much by asking the American people to do what both the New Deal and Fair Deal indicated it was not willing to do—spend enough money to provide such housing. . . . Despite the apparent failure of the concept of urban renewal in the 50's (government providing "seed money" to stimulate private investment), it seems to me that there is no feasible alternative. . . .

Richard Rosen

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Staughton Lynd's unnecessary reference to the program of racial integration in the housing project in southwest Washington contains a number of erroneous facts which could have been corrected by a moderately energetic researcher. The author did not even succeed in placing the project in its proper geographic locale. It is in the southwest part of Washington, not the southeast.

As to more significant data, when I left the building in November 1960—I had been a resident for a year—it had at least seven families who were non-white. This in an apartment building of 402 units. Whether this is a good or a bad record ought to be viewed in the light of the building's rental structure which would seem to attract only upper-middle and upper-income families and thus perhaps exclude many Negroes—on economic grounds.

There are problems in urban renewal, and there are problems in the redevelopment of southwest Washington's former abysmal slum. However, their constructive resolution is given no assist by this kind of sloppy reporting. For a more comprehensive account of the situation see a report to the District of Columbia Board of Commissioners by the D.C. Council on Human Relations issued on January 19, 1961. . . . The developers of the project to which Mr. Lynd refers are among the more vigorous of those who have pointed to the huge pitfalls in urban renewal as it is presently conducted; they have even gone so far as to warn of the possibly destructive "veto" power in the hands of the dispossessed Negro voters. . . . Mr. Lynd's carelessly done paragraph constitutes a gratuitous insult that places much else in his article that *may* be of value under a cloud.

Robert J. Greene

Silver Springs, Md.

Mr. Lynd *writes:*

Mr. Greene is right about the location of the housing project in Washington, D.C. I appreciate his correction.

My informant as to the number of Negro families in the development was a Negro instructor at one of the Washington universities. Evidently, her information was out-of-date even as of last June, when the article was written. She can hardly have been wrong, however, in reporting that several of her (middle-income) Negro friends had unsuccessfully applied for admission.

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I should be very sorry if the inadequacies in my presentation of the situation obscured for any reader the essential problem involved. About two-thirds of the families on the entire redevelopment site I referred to were Negro. On the smaller sub-site (Section B), where the new apartments now stand, 95 per cent of the population was Negro. According to Mr. Greene's figures, the population of the new development is less than 2 per cent Negro. Even when, as was the case on this site, some new public housing is provided and social workers are made available to assist with relocation, it is just not possible in today's housing market to find decent alternative housing for this many minority-group families.

Mr. Greene points out that since the project charges high rents, many Negroes are excluded on economic grounds. Exactly: that is why we should build low-rent apartments for families dispossessed by slum clearance before we build high-rent apartments for people already reasonably well-housed.

I confess I could accept Mr. Greene's strictures with better grace were it not for his backhand reference to "the possibly destructive 'veto' power in the hands of the dispossessed Negro voters." Am I wrong to feel in this phrase some lack of sensitivity to the real horror of the housing conditions in an area like New York City's Harlem?

"Filtering down," which Mr. Rosen recommends, is not an answer. There is little to distinguish brownstones which have "filtered down"—that is, been subdivided and overpriced by rapacious landlords under the nonexistent supervision of a corrupt Buildings Department—in the Urban Renewal Area on New York City's Central Park West, from the grimy tenements packed with low-income immigrants for generation after generation in New York's Lower East Side. Indeed, the brownstones are now being condemned and the tenants sent on to nobody-knows-quite-where.

The essence of the problem is moral. So long as vacant land downtown is "worth too much to use for non-taxpaying housing," and human beings are worth so little that we house them in slums, there will be no "feasible" way out. Once we care enough about the human suffering involved, we can readily put an end to slums. In as rich a society as ours, all that stands in the way is the currently dominant philosophy of " 'each for himself and God for all of us,' as the elephant said while he danced among the chickens."

Middle-Class Rebellion

To the Editor of Commentary:

Professor Friedenberg's broad conclusion ["Truth: Upper, Middle & Lower," December 1960] that there is a "growing middle-class tendency to insist on more variety and uniqueness" seems fuzzy as compared to the high quality of other parts of his essay. . . .

Professor Friedenberg fails to note that the type of higher-minded member of the middle class whom he sees emerging is fundamentally at war with his class! . . . The mistake Professor Friedenberg has made is to suppose that the behavior of *some* . . . is now being slowly adopted by the class as a whole.

Melvin L. Rogers

Yonkers, N. Y.

Harry Golden & His Audience

To the Editor of Commentary:

I want to congratulate Theodore Solotaroff on his courageously perceptive appraisal of Harry Golden ["Harry Golden & the American Audience," January]. . . . Mr. Solotaroff's article is so well documented and his analysis is so well reasoned that he is—I hope—uncontradictable. . . .

(Mrs.) Corinna Marsh

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

At long last! Golden brought to account! . . . In another magazine Golden had once expressed amusement at what I thought were pretty serious aspects of anti-Semitism. . . . Instead of being outraged by some always dangerous expressions of bigotry, he'd merely been moved to laughter. I can't envisage any thoughtful—and vitally involved—person contemplating evil and danger with such detachment. . . .

Joseph Gancher

Albany, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

I am Harry Golden's secretary, from whom he has learned much about Calvinism.

I have just read the article about Mr. Golden in your January issue. It came on the same day that Gerald L. K. Smith's article arrived in his *The Cross and the Flag* where he says that Mr. Golden is the most evil Jew in America except for Sammy Davis, Jr.

I am not terribly concerned with Mr. Solotaroff's dissenting opinion (which as a

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good Presbyterian I can only say—smells), but I am deeply concerned about his use of the English language. On page two: "He [Golden] was praised as *fulsomely* [my italics] by the *Nation* as by Hearst's Chicago *American*. . . ." Now what in the world does Mr. Solotaroff have against the *Nation?* "Fulsome," according to Webster's, . . . means: "disgusting or offensive, especially because of excess or insincerity."

In the interest of good English I would hope that you would publish this letter. It will give me the added satisfaction that there is at least one thing we can teach the Yankees—the meaning of the word fulsome.

(Mrs.) Maureen Titlow
The Carolina Israelite
Charlotte, N.C.

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Solotaroff seems to find it somehow reprehensible that Harry Golden should be "so popular" let alone hosannahed by the critics. This is possibly an expression of another American tradition: the one in which "success" remains unacceptable to an avant-garde intellectual. . . .

Be that as it may, Mr. Solotaroff makes a substantial point when he says that Golden reflects and encompasses the ambivalence that pervades American life. It could be said that any writer . . . of substance . . . reflects the main currents of his time.

There are aspects of Golden's work which Mr. Solotaroff entirely misses or about which he is quite wrong. Prior to his "success" and long prior to the Eisenhower era, Golden published his *Carolina Israelite* and . . . reached a significant and fertile cross-section of Americans who read. Golden was unambiguous about McCarthy and the "race question" way before the former's TV debacle and the 1954 Supreme Court decision. It is in considering this last aspect of Golden's work that Solotaroff is most unfair and incomplete. . . . The pure fact of it is, that if he is not remembered for anything else, which is doubtful . . . Golden will and must be remembered for his immense contributions toward the resolution, however miserably slow, of the race problem. . . .

Golden's journalism may not suit Mr. Solotaroff, but it has the immense virtue of often being engaged. It is committed. . . .

David Wallas
Charlotte, N.C.

To the Editor of Commentary:

I was shocked by Theodore Solotaroff's article on Harry Golden. To me it was a personal attack on Golden under the guise of being an examination of his "acceptance." . . .

Golden is not a historian; he is not a sociologist. His books and articles are his personal reminiscences and opinions. He speaks only for himself; he does not pretend to be the messenger for or the representative of anyone other than Harry Golden. . . .

Literary criticism, it seems to me, must examine the literary effort within the framework of the author's background, philosophy, and intent. Solotaroff's criticism, in effect, examines Golden's writings outside of this framework, and, hence, in a fashion, out of context. Solotaroff has not analyzed Golden's work; he has ruthlessly, and without cause, emasculated it. Not having the courage to do this openly, he does it under the pretext of concerning himself with the reception accorded Golden by the newspapers. . . .

I am thankful that he has informed me that a crowd of "two different people" in one whole week have expressed dissatisfaction with Golden's works. I am fascinated by the thought that perhaps by now *ten* people have expressed dissatisfaction. How abominable my taste must be—I like Golden's work.

As a psychologist, may I suggest, to paraphrase Solotaroff's closing sentence, that he call his next article "Sour Grapes."

(Dr.) Herman D. Arbitman
Euclid, Ohio

Mr. Solotaroff *writes:*

I appreciate Mrs. Titlow's concern for precise usage; however, as it happens, I knew the meaning of *fulsome* at the time I wrote my article. The reviewer in the *Nation* praised Golden's "remarkable sympathetic view of the white South in its desegregation travail," and—fulsomely—related this to Golden's being a Jew: that is, "the unapologetic product of a close-knit, embattled, defensive community." Since a good many of the "proud, embattled, defensive Presbyterians of Charlotte" to which he was said to extend his "Jewish" sympathy, made themselves notorious by lining the street to spit at a Negro girl on her way home from a newly integrated school (see James Baldwin's article in *Partisan Review,* Winter, 1959, and Golden's own, rather curious account in *For 2¢ Plain*), I found the terms of the *Nation* reviewer's praise rather offensive and disgusting, as I imagine most Jews would.

Dr. Arbitman and Mr. Wallas accuse me

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of making a personal attack on Golden and of misrepresenting his work, their implication being that I did so because I was discomforted by his success. However, my intention—which still seems to me perfectly clear—was to analyze as well as criticize not Harry Golden the man but the writer and cultural phenomenon, and also what could be called today, Harry Goldenism: that is, a form of ingratiating, soft, equivocal, superficial social thinking. In order to establish these views solidly and fairly, I quoted extensively from Golden and from his reviewers—that is, not out of malice or cowardice but respect for evidence.

Dr. Arbitman's argument that Golden is not a historian or sociologist is beside the point. Golden's personal opinions often deal with historical or social matters, some of them crucial ones, and since these opinions apparently have a wide influence and effect, they are certainly subject to examination. Thus, I spent about ten pages of my article talking about his "philosophy" and—where demonstrably clear—about its "intent." I was not writing "literary criticism" and deliberately chose a larger and more revealing "context" in which to view Golden's appeal. In his haste to attack me, Dr. Arbitman has clearly missed the point of my article.

Finally, I am accused of underrating and emasculating Golden's achievement. Mr. Wallas points to Golden's good works in the South, though I thought I gave him credit for them to the extent of my knowledge. I am quite willing to concede and be pleased that Golden's personal behavior in the South has helped integration, but that was not the subject of my article. Again, I was not writing about the man (this is being done all the time and doesn't require still another hand) but about the writer and the positions and attitudes he expresses in his books. And there I do not find him being at all "unambiguous" or "committed." Instead I find, for example, Golden writing that the way to have settled school integration in the deep South was by "humanity": to accept the Supreme Court decision, but also "to ask men of good will of both races" to accept the fact that "there are sections of the South which will not integrate schools in our generation." As far as one can make clear from the vagueness of this proposal, the effect of applying it would be to subvert completely the implementation of the decision. In any case, it hardly speaks for Golden's being "unambiguous" and further bears out my general point that he is simply not the "wise and altogether unafraid" social critic he is taken and praised for. It is not the praise itself that disturbs me, Dr. Arbitman's professional opinion notwithstanding, but its basis—the extent to which Golden, as Mr. Wallas says, "encompasses and reflects the ambivalence that pervades American life." That he does so is nothing for him or Mr. Wallas or myself to be happy about.

Science, Education, Antibiotics

To the Editor of Commentary:

Paul Goodman's apparently ingenuous article, "The Human Uses of Science" [December 1960], is one of the strongest anti-intellectual appeals I have read in some time. The ancient cry, "If I don't get it, it ain't worth knowing," is raised as his criterion. . . .

Mr. Goodman reveals an astonishing ignorance of the Uncertainty principle (and not the Principle of Indeterminacy). . . . There is a famous saying which embodies much of the Uncertainty Principle, "As we study something, we tend to learn more and more about less and less till we know everything about nothing." An external observer has nothing to do with this question.

A second point concerns his ignorance of the scientists about whom he writes so knowingly. The "model" scientist received his degree (Ph.D.) in the last decade, is probably under forty, and is more likely to treat his work like a boy in search of salamanders under rocks than like an "old scholarly monk or priest: obsessional, puzzle-solving, ritualistic, and with a detached kind of objectivity."

The last point deals with his conclusion. Is Mr. Goodman a college sophomore who thinks that if all the really smart people got together the world would be peachy dandy? The armament race is not a product of research but the reverse. The use of science to eliminate want is just the technology against which Mr. Goodman inveighs so dramatically.

To require a scientist or the community of scientists to do what no other man or group can do with their employers or field of endeavor—i.e., be circumspect about whom and what they work for—is indeed to place them in a class apart. . . . If the students of the humanities refuse to understand the most powerful force man has found for controlling his environment, then let them bear the onus of being uneducated. . . .

(Dr.) Jay N. Zemel

Hyattsville, Md.

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To the Editor of Commentary:

I have often been provoked by certain articles that appear in Commentary. The object of my irritation is the clumsy, confusing, vague, and inaccurate writing they contain. I am referring specifically to Mr. Paul Goodman. His writing is characteristic of what James Reston calls "gassy report written in that highfalutin and vapid textbook prose which only professors can compose or understand." . . . The item that really got me (at the top of page 466) deals with the "craze" for antibiotics. Where does Mr. Goodman get the medical knowledge to expound with such self-assurance? It only follows, since he is 100 per cent wrong in this field, he is likely to be wrong in his other premises. . . .

(Dr.) Menahem Steinberg
Chicago, Illinois

Drug Addiction, Continued

To the Editor of Commentary:

According to Edwin M. Schur's rejoinder to my comment on his report "Drug Addiction in America and England" ["Controversy," December 1960], we now seem to be in agreement that the narcotic laws of England and America are essentially the same. One difference, says Mr. Schur, is that in Britain doctors have almost complete professional autonomy to make decisions concerning the treatment of addicts. But American doctors have autonomy to administer narcotic drugs to patients within the tenets of proper medical practice, a field carefully delineated in the 1920's under the firm leadership of the American medical profession. . . . It is farfetched and unfair to suggest that the Federal Bureau of Narcotics may have pressured the English into labelling the American-conceived "British system" as an American "invention." . . .

Mr. Schur plays down the "police" aspect in England. At a recent United Nations meeting the English representative was asked why England's opium smoking addicts, more numerous than in America, were not carried in its addict statistics. "Because they are in jail and no longer addicts," was the reply.

Mr. Schur evades the issue on the addict count. He cites two references, neither in the census nor statistical field. I have great respect for Dr. Nyswander, [but] I doubt whether she would claim to be an authority on an addict count. . . . Mr. Schur finds our narcotic control system illogical and ineffective. (Strangely, Mr. Budner also refers to "absolute ineffectiveness.") It seems to me that this is an illogical reference to a system concomitant with which the incidence of addiction and the individual rate of drug intake per addict has declined enormously. . . . In areas in New York, Illinois, and California centers of addiction are still a glaring, festering sore, but we must maintain perspective.

Mr. Schur also says our system is "barbarously inhumane," an epithet which might better be reserved for people who recommend breaking down our safeguards to assure a continued free flow of narcotic poison to the addict and his as yet uncontaminated associates. Of course our system is not perfect. . . . We should have specialized hospital facilities near centers of contagion, and there should be follow-up procedures to require that the addict get the full benefit of everything that medicine can offer. . . . I should like to see Mr. Schur's fine intelligence and facile pen employed in that direction.

M. L. Harney
Formerly Superintendent, Illinois Division of Narcotic Control; formerly Assistant to U. S. Commissioner of Narcotics; Assistant to Secretary, U. S. Treasury, for Law Enforcement, Retired.

Mr. Schur *writes:*

Mr. Harney maintains that American doctors have autonomy to administer narcotics "within the tenets of proper medical practice." . . . It is true that our *laws* do not prohibit doctors from treating addicts; yet the interpretation and administration of these laws have quite effectively curtailed medical initiative in this area. Mr. Harney refers to the firm leadership of the medical profession in the 1920's—that is, the AMA's 1924 resolution urging a ban on ambulatory treatment. He fails to mention the following 1957 recommendation of the AMA's Council on Mental Health: "The 1924 Resolution should be revised. Consideration should be given to broadening the Resolution to include a plan endorsing regulations somewhat similar to those currently in force in England."

I only conjectured about American pressure to play down the British "system," but frankly I cannot think of any other reason why British officials should deny its existence. I agree that there is a police aspect to the situation in England. Yet British officials do not insist that addiction is primarily a police problem, nor do they appear to harbor punitive attitudes toward addicts. True, one finds a different sort of person prevailing among addicts in Britain—but why is this

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so? Largely, I believe, because British policy prevents addiction from spreading.

Mr. Harney says the estimates of U. S. addiction which I cite are not "in the census or statistical field." To my knowledge there are no census data on addicts; only the Bureau's own figures, which surely may be open to question. . . . Mr. Harney asserts that present policies have reduced addiction, but even official figures indicate the persistence of a major social problem.

I would be curious to know what "safeguards" I recommend breaking down. At least Mr. Harney sees that the policies I advocate would assure a "continued" flow of drugs. For certainly addicts get their drugs now, under highly undesirable auspices and conditions. I too favor better treatment facilities, but even with follow-up procedures the prospects for long-term cure seem slight. And it is hard enough to permanently cure voluntary addict-patients; the government's compulsory confinement approach only makes matters worse.

"Atavistic" Jewish Law

To the Editor of Commentary:

I was . . . disappointed by the review of Norman Bentwich's *The Jews in Our Time* by Lucy Dawidowicz in the December issue. . . . It took a wholly gratuitous "side-swipe" at Isidore Epstein's Penguin volume, *Judaism*. . . . The reviewer accuses Epstein twice of "fundamentalism." She also calls him a "halachist." . . . A Talmudist and halachist such as Epstein can hardly be accused of "fundamentalism" or "literalism." . . . The reviewer also accuses Dr. Epstein of an "atavistic approach to Jewish law." But Jewish law, as Dr. Epstein tries to show in his book, is a developing process. Is the attribution of "atavism" to serve as a new means by which Jewish law is merely rejected and discussion then turned to other matters? . . .

In her haste to praise the Bentwich volume as a "corrective," the reviewer swallowed whole several items. . . . The chapter on the "modern Jewish contribution" is a case in point. There we are presented with a long list of "baptized Jews" said to represent the modern Jewish contribution to the world. These include Marx, Freud, Boris Pasternak, Fritz Haber, Mendelssohn, and on and on. . . . To speak endlessly of the Jews' "profound sense of abstract unity" or their "way of being first" or the Jewish "talent for exploring sealed lands" or of their "exhibiting a flair for anticipating taste," does seem just one step away from saying that Jews have peculiarly shaped heads or noses.

The climax of this approach comes in a later chapter, however, where we are told that intermarriage is no longer really a danger and anyway the "cross-fertilization" which results is good for humanity since a "remarkable number of geniuses have been the offspring of mixed marriages." If it is from such an approach to Judaism that Dr. Epstein retreats and is "atavistic," let us have more of it. . . .

Lawrence A. Kobrin

New York City

"Cannibals All!"

To the Editor of Commentary:

In Professor Stanley M. Elkins' otherwise masterful review of George Fitzhugh's *Cannibals All!* [November 1960] . . . he says of Fitzhugh that "he refused, in his defense of slavery, to use the one argument—racial inferiority—that carried real weight in the North despite all the abolitionists' equalitarian polemics." . . . But . . . Fitzhugh plainly advanced that argument in his *Sociology for the South*, published three years earlier in 1854: "Now, it is clear [Fitzhugh wrote] the Athenian democracy would not suit a Negro nation. . . . He is but a grown-up child and must be governed as a child. . . ." It must be said that at the very least, the historical record reveals an equality of polemical irresponsibility either side of the Mason-Dixon line.

Michael McGiffert

University of Denver
Denver, Colorado

Mr. Elkins *writes:*

I regret that my review of *Cannibals All!* gave the impression that Fitzhugh was completely above racism. He clearly believed, as did the great majority of Americans of his generation both North and South, that the Negro was by nature childlike and improvident, and he said as much in *Sociology for the South*. He was careful, however, to limit the implications of this inferiority. The Negro was not a brute, he was a full-fledged human being, albeit weak and dependent.

In *Cannibals All!*, moreover, by stressing the universality of dependence, Fitzhugh blurred the notion of a specifically racial inferiority and further emphasized the Negro's humanity. This may still have been racism, but it was a far more humane and a potentially more flexible racism than the rigid color consciousness that domi-

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nated the thinking of so many of Fitzhugh's contemporaries.

Progress, More Progress

To the Editor of Commentary:

I think that the dispute ["Affluence," January] between Ernest van den Haag and his Marxist critics [Lewis Coser and Ben Seligman] gets to the heart of the issue. The nature of Progress (especially Marxist hyper-Progress) seems to me that to which everything else in the world situation today is relative. . . . The problem is how to stop the race of Progress itself, i.e., how to level off and stabilize all these trends of inhumanist automatism—over-industrialization, over-urbanization, under-conservation, over-population, over-education, over-organization (totalitarianism). It is all one complex, and the solution to it, and to the totalitarian problem, are theoretically the same.

But I think Mr. van den Haag's conjecture—that people don't want to give up mass production—is not quite on target. In the first place, it's not a question of mass production as such or alone, but of all the other developments as well; in the second place, I don't think it *is* necessary to "give up" mass production but merely to put an end to its endlessness (precisely where, is, of course, a matter upon which many views are possible—but the principle is all-essential); in the third place, I doubt that the problem is that the *people* don't want to do this, so much as the *intellectuals,* and primarily the contemporary liberal-Marxist ideocracy. I agree, as a matter of fact, with the Coser-Seligman implication (explicated by van den Haag) that the people don't really know *a priori* what they do want politically—this has been true since the beginning of civilization, or since the Fall. I *also* agree with Mr. van den Haag when he says, more or less conceding this point, that the judgment of the people would, however, be better than that of "the government." . . . This formal opposition set up between people and government is perhaps not a *necessary* one, but one to a large extent based upon the conflict of motive inherent in Progress itself. That is, the conflict and mistrust might be much less were the government founded upon a different view of Progress.

It is difficult to understand how Mr. van den Haag could support the pernicious notion of disposing of putative classroom or teacher shortages by holding school on Saturdays—an idea worthy of Scrooge (or am I thinking of Gradgrind?). Here he appears to be yielding to the fallacy he had pointed out in Coser and Seligman, that "more" education would be better—though it may be that he is only trying to save some money. Well, I myself believe we need "more education" about as badly as a moose needs a hatrack (that is, as an *ideological* objective: in terms of competitive power politics, it may be that we do "need" more education and more science—the same way we "need" more atom bombs). . . . There has in recent years been some talk of reducing the industrial work week to four days, and I fail to see why this same privilege should not be extended to the kids. Or rather, I do see why—it is because we can be pretty sure, under the present circumstances, that adults would not abuse the extra time. That is, they would buy and consume more, more automobiles and TV sets; or, on the other hand, they would read and write more articles for the intellectual journals denouncing the evils of mass culture. In other words, civilization would be safe. But you can't trust kids to do this—they are just as likely to spend the whole day playing pitch-penny with a pile of bottle-caps—and how would we milk any Progress out of that? (If this obnoxious idea gains any further ground, I am going to propose the formation of the Huck Finn Left, Center, and Right Revolutionary and Monday-Off Party.)

Marxism, so far from overcoming the "competitiveness" of capitalism (read: pressure upon *au naturel* freedom), doubles it and is better described as "hypercapitalism" than "socialism." (*Any* system, including capitalism, is perforce "social.") Getting rid of the wicked capitalists has not and will in no way improve the situation—this is the empirical fact that can be observed. Although waxing in power, and although it may yet roll over us, Marxism no longer attracts either genuine intellect or sensibility. It is the conservatism of our time, and "radical" in a purely verbal or Orwellian sense.

True radicalism may be found variously, almost at random, to the left or to the right, above or below, but certainly not in Marxism, para-Marxism, quasi-Marxism, crypto-Marxism, or neo-Marxism. No matter how you slice it—and whether or not you sauce it with "humanism"—or "humanismo"—it's still Marxism. And it's still based on the delusion that there is nothing wrong with Progress that doing more of it, and faster, won't cure.

Jack Jones

New York City

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The Thought of Stuart Hampshire*

RICHARD J. BERNSTEIN

STUART HAMPSHIRE is a philosopher who has written urbanely and incisively on literary, political, and philosophic subjects. Throughout his writings he has constantly emphasized the need to reintroduce the tradition of careful argument in art, politics, and history—areas grossly neglected by most contemporary Anglo-Saxon philosophers. For those, however, who feel compelled to classify philosophers into schools or movements, Hampshire would probably be pigeonholed with the analytic movement that has had such a strong grip on recent English philosophy. But the attractiveness and originality of Hampshire is that he resists any such neat classification. It is true that he does insist that philosophic insight comes from close attention to specific detail, precision, and clear argument. Defending the foxlike temperament so characteristic of the analytic philosopher, Hampshire has written in the clash of debate, "it seems to me doubtful whether the kind of philosopher (e.g., Whitehead) who is always announcing that he is concerned with great, fundamental human problems, is generally the man who in fact helps to solve them. This is often better done, step by careful step, by quiet methodical men who are not always speaking at the top of their voices."

Viewed internally, Hampshire is in many ways outside the main drift of analytic philosophy. He has been a conscience for his more complacent colleagues, encouraging them to employ their powerful analytic techniques on pressing problems of contemporary life. He has warned them about the dangers of provincialism and reminded them that the moral situation is primarily one of conflict where we must decide and act, and do not simply engage in armchair evaluation. Hampshire, too, is one of the few English philosophers today who has more than a superficial acquaintance with French thought, and there are definite signs of influence by French phenomenological analysis. Added to these virtues is a lively interest in the great philosophers of the past. His earlier book on Spinoza is a model of what a philosophic introduction ought to be. Spinoza's thought is developed with freshness, excitement, and with a sensitive awareness of its relevance to contemporary philosophic discussion.

Thought and Action, Hampshire's first sustained attempt to survey a complex web of philosophic issues, is, nevertheless, extremely disappointing. It is stimulating and suggestive because it is a serious attempt to break out of the narrowness of recent philosophizing and to sketch subtly the intricacies of the human situation. But where illumination is most wanted, there is only shadowy haze. While there is the semblance of careful argument, one constantly feels that crucial points are glossed over in the rush to treat the next facet of the problem.

THROUGHOUT THE ESSAY, Hampshire refers to his argument, but it is an argument more in the sense of a plot rather than a systematically connected series of steps in a proof. And the key to understanding the plot lies in the attempt to understand man as an agent, an active participant in a changing world of persisting objects, rather than a passive spectator looking into the world from some dimensionless point. The essay might have been subtitled "a phenomenology of action." Hampshire shows us that if we take action seriously and describe its fluctuating nuances, then the old terrain of philosophic issues assumes a radically new appearance.

One of the first doctrines to collapse when we appreciate that man as a perceiver and

* A review of *Thought and Action* by Stuart Hampshire (Viking, 276 pp., $4.50).

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knower is a self-moving object in a world of objects is the myth of complete description. To discriminate and identify persisting objects in our environment is an essential condition of human life, but we can never exhaustively describe reality. Any element of reality can be classified in an indefinite number of alternative ways. An "element" itself is only intelligible with reference to some specific method of classification. And the conceptual schemes that we use to discriminate objects are themselves parts of a larger, changing social context. Their development is the development of social life through history. Complete description, then, is impossible because of the very nature of description: we can never even exhaustively describe what is before us in our immediate environment.

The import of this claim may not be immediately apparent, but Hampshire in one fell swoop is downing two basic dogmas of traditional philosophy. Philosophers have held as a legitimate ideal the possibility of a complete system—a complete description (in principle) of reality. Argument has focused on the proper means of ever attaining this goal. (This is not an ideal of the remote past. The last impressive attempt to outline such a complete description was Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.*) Hampshire's point is not simply that such an ideal is unattainable, but that it is specious—specious because of its false presupposition about the nature of description. At the same time Hampshire is attacking one of the most deeply embedded beliefs of British empiricism—the belief that we somehow construct a public external world from private sense data. Summing up an argument that has developed under the dominant influence of Wittgenstein's later investigations, Hampshire says, "I would not . . . be in a position to describe my sensations unless I also had in my language the means to identify and to describe external objects."

Action is not only intimately connected with perceiving and describing, it is inextricably bound up with personality. Action is a combination of intention and physical movement. But this combination cannot be interpreted in a mechanical or dualistic fashion. Deftly approaching the problem from a number of perspectives, Hampshire argues that there is a constant flow of intention into action and that it is impossible to demarcate a clear and fixed boundary between intention and the concrete action. "From the experience of action also arises that idea of the unity of mind and body, which has been distorted by philosophers when they think of persons only as passive observers and not as self-willed agents." Again Hampshire's observations have hidden reverberations. He is undermining the dualism of mind and body that has plagued modern philosophy—a dualism not only characteristic of the Cartesian tradition but implicitly accepted by both materialists and idealists.

THE PLOT unfolds into a number of subplots. The analysis of action leads us to intention, and intention leads on to consciousness and back to knowledge. We cannot simply have intentions without knowing that we have them. We can see how far we have come from the theory of mind as a theater of passing discrete perceptions when we are told that to be conscious is to be conscious of intended actions. "A conscious mind is always and necessarily envisaging possibilities of action." Man is essentially a forward-looking animal.

Hampshire skillfully tries to bring intention into sharper focus by discussing it in relation to memory, belief, desire, and decision. All this is but a preparation for the denouement—the analysis of freedom. It is at this point that Hampshire aligns himself with a tradition that runs from Spinoza to Freud. There can be various degrees of self-consciousness in action which comes from more and more clear and explicit knowing of what I am doing. In this way man *becomes* free. "I become comparatively free, free in the sense that my achievements either directly correspond to my intentions, or are attributable to my incompetence or powerlessness in execution. . . ." Man, although caught in a complex web of social patterns, is not trapped by his historical situation. Habits of self-conscious criticism can modify habits of behavior, and the habits of criticism can themselves be modified, corrected, and strengthened in communal life.

Now all this may sound vaguely familiar to an American reader, and with good reason. Not only the language (except for the grace of style), but the entire drift of the

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argument bears a strong family resemblance to the pragmatic movement, especially the thought of Peirce and Dewey. They also set out to criticize the Cartesian grip on modern philosophy. Dewey lashed out at the "idea of invidiously real reality," and "the spectator notion of knowledge." He argued that the analysis of human experience takes on a new vitality and authenticity when we understand man as an agent. Even in such an area as aesthetics, where one might least expect to find similarity, there is agreement that the aesthetic experience is one of immediate contemplation where "thought of the possibility of action is for a time partly suspended."

Because of the inveterate English habit of not taking American philosophy seriously, it is doubtful whether Hampshire was directly influenced by Dewey. (There is no mention of pragmatism or any of the philosophers associated with this movement.) The coincidence of views may be taken as an independent confirmation of the pragmatists' insights. But it also has something to do with the weaknesses of *Thought and Action*. If Hampshire had started where the pragmatists left off, we might have had a more careful, persistent inquiry into problems neither he nor pragmatism solves.

THE KEY FAULT of the essay lies with the failure sufficiently to clarify and justify central theses. This can be briefly illustrated with reference to the two key motifs—the unity of mind and body, and the analysis of human freedom. Hampshire does point out that dualism fails to account for the data revealed by an attentive analysis of human action. He speaks of the "flow of intention into action," and the "trajectory of action," suggesting a genuine continuity where others have claimed a radical discontinuity. But has he offered us an acceptable alternative to dualism? I think not. In the end we seem to be driven back to the metaphors of "flow" and "trajectory." But how (in the Kantian sense of the question) is such a flow possible? What precisely are we presupposing when we claim a continuity between the mental and the physical? Can we justify these presuppositions? Nowhere does Hampshire squarely confront these problems.

Unless we have a satisfactory understanding of the relation of the mental and the physical, as Hampshire himself argues, an adequate account of human freedom is impossible. The incompleteness of Hampshire's remarks on freedom can be seen from another angle. In an acute discussion of Freud, Hampshire rightly dismisses the faulty view that Freud denies human freedom. Freud opens the way to a deeper level of self-consciousness in behavior, thereby enlarging the scope of human freedom. But to leave the argument at this point, as Hampshire seems to do, is to distort Freud, and, more important, to gloss over the problem of freedom. Freud's dialectic does not end with an affirmation of human freedom. Corresponding to new levels of self-consciousness are new levels of self-deceit. There is always the possibility—and not just the logical possibility—that in our clearest moments of self-consciousness and firm intention we are tricked into thinking that we are acting freely. The merits of Freud's analysis are not at issue. But until one has supplied the criteria for determining genuine self-consciousness and has explicated what the "self" means here, an analysis of freedom will be incomplete and unsatisfactory.

One of Hampshire's more forcefully argued points is that we cannot isolate intention from achievement. If a man fails to achieve what he intended we have a right to judge him accordingly. Hampshire thus supplies the standard for evaluating his own "general survey" of man's situation.

Sources of Victory

THE FAITHFUL CITY. By Dov JOSEPH. Simon and Schuster. 356 pp. $5.95.

A CLASH OF DESTINIES. By JON AND DAVID KIMCHE. Praeger. 287 pp. $4.95.

Reviewed by R. H. S. CROSSMAN

ISRAELI, like American, democracy emerged in the course of an anti-British war. Both nations grew secretly under a slothful but by no means tyrannical British administration, to emerge suddenly, fully grown and fully armed, in a war of independence. From the British point of view, the loss of the Palestine Mandate, like the loss of the American colonies, was a disgraceful consequence of governmental blindness and folly. Yet, ironically enough, a shameful British scuttle has

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in each case proved wholly beneficial to relations between the two peoples.

Whereas the facts of the American War of Independence are well established, the history of the Israeli War of Independence has still to be written. That war began with the widespread Arab attacks on Jewish settlements which followed the United Nations partition decision in November 1947. It ended with the Rhodes armistice agreements of 1949. The first phase was dominated by Ernest Bevin's Operation Chaos, the attempt to arrange the withdrawal of an army of 100,000 men and a civil administration more numerous than that which ruled the whole of India, in such a way as to insure that the embryonic Jewish nation was strangled at birth. During this first phase, the Haganah, and every other Jewish defense force, was an illegal organization; most of the British navy was still active organizing the blockade of Palestine and hauling off whatever immigrants they could catch into vast concentration camps on Cyprus. Meanwhile, on the other side, Ernest Bevin had arranged that the frontier should be completely open, and a large army of Arab irregulars had entered the country to collaborate with the British-officered and British-equipped Arab Legion.

Phase I ended on May 4, 1948, the last day of the Mandate and the first day of the State of Israel. Field Marshal Montgomery celebrated the event by breezily declaring that the outcome of the war was already certain and the Arabs would "hit the Jews for six into the Mediterranean." Phase II then began with the advance of the six Arab armies into Jewish Palestine. The Yishuv was desperately hard pressed. All Ben Gurion had under his command was a resistance movement, superbly trained for guerrilla and sabotage action against the occupying power, but without either the organization or the equipment for conventional war. Moreover, whereas sound strategy required a war of mobility, he was unable, for reasons of morale, to permit a withdrawal at any point, and he had to jeopardize a large part of his forces defending indefensible positions, in particular Jerusalem. When the first truce came on June 11, the Israelis had revealed more heroism than skill in their fighting. They were profoundly relieved. They had survived—but they could not claim much more than that.

The third and final phase of the war starts when the Arabs refused to maintain this truce and continues in a crescendo of Jewish successes, which reached their climax in the Negev victories of December 1948. In retrospect, we can see that, during the June truce, both the nature of the war and the balance of power shifted in favor of Israel. If we seek to uncover the secret of the Jewish victory, we must concentrate our attention on those critical days.

Dov Joseph's story of the siege of Jerusalem provides us with a large part of the explanation. Joseph is one of the very few Canadian Jews who have broken into the Russian-born Israeli aristocracy and become a prominent politician. A lawyer by profession, he had made himself invaluable long before 1948. In that "State within a State," the Jewish Agency, he was a member of the secret group, headed by Ben Gurion, which ran the resistance. Naturally enough, therefore, as a prominent Jerusalem citizen he was selected to become military governor of the city and in this book gives us what is likely to become the classical account of the famous siege. Combined with the painstaking attention to detail of an official record, *The Faithful City* has all the vitality of a personal document. The picture it gives is all the more vivid because it is written in an unadorned, vigorous English.

No PEOPLE could have been more congenitally unsuited to stand a siege than the Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem. A large number, particularly in the Old City, belonged to ultra-Orthodox sects that regarded Zionism as a heresy and fighting as a crime, as well as refusing to accept the authority of any civil administration, including that of Dov Joseph. Before the siege, no one had ever been able to unite them for any purpose except in protest against whatever invader happened to be in power and interfering with their piety. Apart from the "pious," the rest of the population consisted, for the most part, of officials, clerks, and shopkeepers; there was virtually no industry. This aging and querulous conglomerate of quarrelsome but unwarlike Jews lived, completely cut off, in aggressively Arab territory. It was dependent for its water on a pumping station held by the Arabs at Latrun and for its food on the Arab villages round

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about. To complete the picture, I must add that its handful of armed defenders were bitterly divided between the official Haganah, the Irgun, and the Stern Gang.

That Jewish Jerusalem did not fall to the Arab Legion was largely due to the organizing ability of its military governor. It took a very tough and awkward man to enforce strict rationing on the bakeries and food shops of Jewish Jerusalem and to cut down the use of water to a few pints a head per day in the middle of the summer. But Dov Joseph did more. Foreseeing that the water pipe to Latrun would be cut, he made sure, before the proper siege began, that every cistern, however ancient, should be patched and filled, and he extended this to the Arab areas as he took them over. As a result of Dov Joseph's precautions, Jerusalem just survived the first period of hostilities. Yet, by the time the first truce was imposed, fuel supplies had dwindled to only three tons of fuel oil, 600 gallons of gasoline, and 37 tins of kerosene for the whole beleaguered city.

> The stock records showed that on June 9, two days before the first truce, we were down to a potential of 42,600 loaves for the whole city. This meant less than half a loaf per person, or, at a minimum distribution of barely six ounces per day, a 3-day ration. . . . We were able to hold out only because we had kept our average daily ration of food distributed down to the dangerously low figure of 900 calories.

A superb administrator, Dov Joseph was also the ideal leader in the unique conditions of this siege. One story which he tells characterizes his qualities. One day, after the British had withdrawn, he was asked by the Chief Rabbi to meet the ultra-Orthodox Jews at his house. After some hesitation one elder told him how fundamental it was to Jewish religious precepts to save life. They thought that perhaps they could go out to the Arabs and arrange that their quarter of the city should be excluded from the fighting. Dov Joseph concludes the story:

> Again silence reigned. Finally he mustered up the courage to ask, "Well, what say you?"
>
> I said, "You do what you believe to be right, and I shall do what I believe to be right."
>
> Again silence, followed by another question: "And what do you think to be right?"
>
> I replied, "I think that if anyone attempts to raise the white flag, he will be shot." With this, I rose, told the rabbis that I had nothing more to say, and left.

Unfortunately *The Faithful City* contains more than the record of an epic siege. Like everyone else, Dov Joseph has the defects of his virtues, and much of his book is taken up with his vendettas, first against Shaltiel, the Jewish military commander in Jerusalem, and secondly against the British, the United Nations officials and the consular officials, particularly the Belgians and the Americans. It is natural enough that, although he had no responsibility for the military operations, Dov Joseph has succumbed to the temptation to tell the soldiers how he would have fought the war if he had been in their place. A much more serious defect in his book is his inability, even in retrospect, to see anything but the official Israeli point of view. The British record in Palestine is shameful enough without the blatant exaggerations he practices. Indeed, one almost begins to sympathize with the English soldiers when one discovers that everyone else—particularly the United Nations truce supervisors and the consular representatives—was just as bad. By the end I could almost hear the grating sound of Dov Joseph's voice as he stood before the United Nations officials and listed in circumstantial detail the ten-thousandth Arab truce violation that had been brought to his notice, or punctiliously pointed out that "as on previous occasions, the Israel authorities had been overscrupulously careful to comply with the decisions of the UN, to the detriment of our position."

The truth, of course, is that each truce was used by the Israelis with superlative skill to carry out illegal reinforcement and equally illegal strengthening of their strategic and economic position throughout the country. Indeed, the war was won largely because they succeeded, particularly during the first truce, in evading United Nations supervision and transforming the balance of military power. Perhaps one should not expect a lawyer, even in retrospect, to concede a point. But I should have dearly liked an appendix to this semi-official narrative, in which the military governor of Jerusalem let us into the secret of how, under cover of

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complaints about Arab truce violations, he succeeding in hoodwinking the UN officials for the sake of his own people's survival.

THESE omissions from *The Faithful City* are more than remedied in *A Clash of Destinies*. This austere study of military operations is the first serious attempt to investigate what really happened in the Arab-Jewish war. In writing it, the Kimche brothers have had the advantage of access to the records of the Ministry of Defense in Tel Aviv; furthermore, the whole of their manuscript has been read and annotated by David Ben Gurion. The peculiar importance of this book, therefore, is that it contains more truths unpalatable to their own side than official Israeli historians will for some time be able to record. Particular attention should be given to the numbers of troops engaged, as recorded by the Kimches. They emphasize that, even compared with the Sinai campaign of 1956, the scale of the fighting was tiny. On May 14, the day of Israeli independence, the total number of Jewish effectives was 35,000 men, equipped with 22,000 rifles, 11,000 sub-machine guns, and four old pieces of artillery. The Arab troops, though much better equipped, were roughly equal in number and almost as short of ammunition. Each side was convinced that the other was overwhelmingly stronger—which explains why so many opportunities were missed by both.

By the end of the first truce, however, the balance of power had been transformed. Whereas the Arabs had 40,000 men in Palestine, the Israeli armies had risen to 60,000: and their equipment was now markedly superior. Most important of all, they had achieved, under Ben Gurion, a unified command; whereas the Arab armies were not only operating independently but maneuvering against each other.

The Kimches also make a full and careful investigation of the reasons why the Arab refugees fled from their homes. Even in the case of Haifa, where the evidence is scarcely disputed, an element of mystery remains. It is clear, however, that both the Jewish claim (that the refugees left as the result of instructions from their leaders) and the Arab claim (that they were all deliberately terrorized and expelled from their homes) are gross oversimplifications.

In dealing with the role of the British government, the Kimches seem to me to have been scrupulously, and at times almost over-scrupulously, fair. But it is useful for Americans to be reminded that Mr. Truman's sins of omission were very nearly as grave as Mr. Bevin's sins of commission. The enthusiasm for the Jewish cause shown by the White House was equaled only by its ignorance, whereas the State Department was as foolishly pro-Arab as the British Foreign Office. That the Jews survived was not due to any assistance they got either from Washington or from Moscow, but to their conviction that every hand but their own was against them. In the event, this assumption proved not far wrong. As soon as British Middle Eastern paramountcy was ended and the United States sought to take over, it was clear that the Americans had learned nothing from Bevin's mistakes but would commit them on a greater and even more disastrous scale.

THE KIMCHES conclude that the Jews owed their victory to three main factors. In the first place, whereas the Arab armies never achieved a common strategy or even a common goal, Ben Gurion was able, during the first truce, to transform a tangle of competing terrorist groups into a conventional army. Secondly, he was able to equip this army by purchases first from behind the Iron Curtain and then from nearer home. The superiority of the Jewish over the Arab armies' purchasing commissions was a not unimportant factor in the ultimate victory. Thirdly, Israel profited by the speed with which Ben Gurion learned to use each successive truce for preparing his next offensive. Indeed, the Kimches reveal that, in the final stages, the Israeli Premier was able to impose his own armistice terms on the Iraqi and the Arab Legion by the secret threat of yet another truce violation—this time an offensive designed to clear the whole area west of the Jordan.

I cannot recommend *A Clash of Destinies* to those who want their history painted in florid colors and prefer the purple patch to the painful search for fact. Its authors have been deeply influenced by the writings of Liddell Hart, in particular by *The Other Side of the Hill*, in which the British military expert tried to see the Second World War

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through the eyes of the captured German generals he had interrogated; and it is remarkable to note what trouble two ardent Zionists have taken to see the Israeli War of Independence not only through Jewish but also through Arab and British eyes. The result is a book which will be completely indispensable to future historians. Although it punctures at least as many Israeli as Arab legends, *A Clash of Destinies* heightens the sense of Jewish achievement. Indeed, the best way of savoring its quality is to compare, paragraph by paragraph, its concise account of the siege of Jerusalem with the much lengthier version given by Dov Joseph. When the personal feuding and forensic propaganda are cut away, we realize that this is a story which gains by the austere objectivity of the narrators.

The Enchanted Void

THE GO-AWAY BIRD AND OTHER STORIES. By MURIEL SPARK. Lippincott. 215 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by THOMAS ROGERS

MURIEL SPARK is an English writer of great originality, who, since 1957, has published five novels and this collection of eleven short stories. Here is a sizable body of work produced, it seems, while our heads were turned. I have recently searched in vain through back issues of the *Partisan Review,* the *Kenyon Review,* and the *Sewanee Review* to see how these organs of what used to be called the avant-garde have treated her. They have had nothing to say. She has been discussed in *Time,* the *New Yorker,* and the *New York Times Book Review,* but not to much avail. The opinion there is that she is brilliant, funny, and "a person to watch." Perhaps the weeklies are waiting for the quarterlies to set the odds; there's a vague horse-racing flavor about this phrase (from the *Times*), "Trend-watchers are advised to note the name of Muriel Spark." Meanwhile, as we watch the trends and watch each other, Miss Spark writes more and more books.

Her chief equipment is a style that suggests neighborhood gossip raised to art by the exercise of an economy that does not destroy the texture of petty, solid, local factuality. She tells you about her characters in a tone that implies scandal even where there is none, and she employs this tone even when she is dealing with frankly supernatural events. In "Miss Pinkerton's Apocalypse" a flying saucer appears and Miss Pinkerton gets angry when her friend George denies it's an antique saucer.

> He ought to have been more tactful, and would have been but for the stress of the moment. Of course it set Miss Pinkerton off, she being in the right.
>
> "I know my facts," she stated as usual, "I should hope I know my facts. I've been in antique china for twenty-three years in the autumn," which was true, and George knew it.

I am able to become annoyed by a tone so much at odds with the material, but when Miss Spark handles realistic subjects her potential coyness disappears and in stories like "The Black Madonna" she illuminates a whole slice of postwar English life. A young couple named Raymond and Lou live on Manders Street in a County Council flat in Cripps House in one of the new housing estates. "One day," said Lou, "it will be the thing to live in a County Council flat." They vote Labor, take the *Observer,* and are friendly with Jamaican Negroes. Everything is described with a fine sense of local actuality, and what happens is that Lou and Raymond pray to a bog oak Madonna and get a child. It is as black as the Madonna to which they prayed. Scandal! At first Raymond suspects those Jamaicans he and Lou were friendly with. Finally, however, the blackness is traced to a seafaring strain in Lou's Liverpudlian antecedents. They give away the child. In "You Should Have Seen the Mess" a London stenographer from another County Council background refuses to date an attractive young artist from a higher social level than her own because his flat "was the most unhygienic place I have seen in my life."

These perverse decisions and life-denying conclusions are typical. The world Miss Spark describes is by no means a happy place. In spite of the intimacy of her tone, the lives she writes about do not seem to have much charm or vitality. This can be seen with particular clarity in the title story of the present collection. The heroine is named, with some bravado, Daphne du

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Toit, but her name and her background are the only vivid things about her. She is brought up in a tense and even dangerous African setting but typically she longs for the damp, subdued life of England. This perverse desire to exchange African sun for English mist is partly the result of Daphne's low vitality, but partly it is her response to the cry of a local bird, the "Go-Away" bird, whose cry dramatizes the threatening aspects of Africa. When Daphne does at last go to England, it seems to be an act of self-preservation. Once in London, however, she is exploited by unattractively "charming" relatives (rather like characters from an Angela Thirkell novel). Next she falls into the hands of a rapacious postwar dowager who makes a living out of sponsoring colonial debutantes. Finally she falls in love with a writer who more or less milks her of her life story and then loses interest. She dredges up more and more facts from her colorful childhood, but the facts fail to revive her romance. " 'Go away,' said Ralph to Daphne. 'Go away and leave me in peace.' " She does go away, back to Africa where she is killed. Ralph, rather *désoeuvré* at the moment, follows her not out of remorse or elegiac love, but in hopes that her death might provide him with material for a new book. He is disappointed.

This is a moving and brilliant novella. It bears some resemblance to Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust,* and Miss Spark has been both compared to and endorsed by Waugh. The comparison at least is misleading, though one can see why it has been made. Tony Last, the hero of *A Handful of Dust,* is a happy young man who is gradually deprived of everything he cares about —his wife, his home, his son. He is the exploited hero just as Daphne is the exploited heroine. Yet the differences between them are striking, for Tony finally resists whereas Daphne acquiesces and finally succumbs. Secondly, the movement of the two stories is entirely different. *A Handful of Dust* is centrifugal, things are flying apart, whereas "The Go-Away Bird" is centripetal. Daphne is driven back to where she came from and killed there. Finally, in Waugh's novel the surface aspects of chaos and disorder are vividly and amusingly described, whereas the unseen, shaping force in Daphne's life is merely suggested by the cry of the "Go-Away" bird.

It is a mistake, then, to think of Miss Spark as another witty English novelist with an economical style and nothing to do with it except carry on at a lower level of vitality the comic tradition of Evelyn Waugh. Her work has a point and continuity of its own.

IN HER FIRST novel, *The Comforters* (1957), a woman writer suffering from nerves becomes hallucinated by the sound of a typewriter tapping and voices reciting passages from . . . *The Comforters.* She realizes her life is being shaped by the monstrous fact that she's a character in a novel, and though at first she tries to resist, at the end of the book she retires to the country to accept dictation from her voices. Thus the very act of literary creation becomes a passive acceptance of What Happens. *Memento Mori* (1958) deals entirely with very old people who are troubled by a mysterious telephone caller whose only message is, "Remember you must die." They hire detectives to track down this "madman," and they hire secretaries to answer the phone. It is only a bedridden old lady of eighty-two, deformed by arthritis (again the shaping, crushing motif) who says, " 'You might, perhaps, try to remember you must die.' "

Daphne is like the woman writer and bedridden old lady in being shaped and finally overwhelmed by a mysterious force which is announced in her case as in theirs by an audible message: the typewriter and voices, the telephone, the cry of the bird. The similarity between the three women is further enhanced by the fact that they are all involved with the same sort of man. These men are curious, snoopy, fact-loving creatures. Like Ralph in "The Go-Away Bird" they seem to have only one carnal appetite, an appetite for facts. And like Ralph, they don't respond to the facts once they've gotten them. In *The Comforters* Lawrence Manders does not believe he's a character in a novel. In *Memento Mori,* Alec Warner thinks the telephone messages are the result of mass hypnosis. By ignoring the reality of the novelist at work, or of death, the men remain unbroken by the force which crushes the women, but their reaction is sterile and uncreative. Ralph finds he cannot use Daphne's story for his

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new novel. Neither man nor woman is capable of making a really creative or even gallant resistance to force. In *Memento Mori* there is a breathlessly dramatic description of an old woman alone in her home gathering her resources to make tea for herself. She succeeds, but such episodes are rare in Miss Spark's fiction. In general it is as if her world is under a glass bell from which the atmosphere has been briskly pumped. One feels external forces gathering to crush the glass and nothing within her world seems capable of exerting a counteracting pressure.

The significance of all this is doubtless complex, but it does not require much imagination to see political meaning in the helplessness and paralysis of Miss Spark's characters. She is undoubtedly reflecting in part the mood of the English upper and middle classes who increasingly find themselves in a world they did not make and do not feel able to control. Muriel Spark has a refreshingly wide knowledge of English social levels, but in dealing with her County Council families she is clearly approaching them from above. Her home base is certainly within the class that has been most affected by the loss of Empire and the postwar readjustment within England.

In thinking about Miss Spark's male characters, a further point suggests itself. We have heard from the Angry Young Men and they turn out, on the whole, to be rebels against the Establishment, the interlocked political, educational, and social leadership. Their faces are set against "abroad"; they are insular and provincial in outlook, rejecting the cultural Francophilia of Bloomsbury together with the imperial tradition in general. In 19th-century political terms they would be called Little Englanders, and what strikes me after reading Muriel Spark is that their attitude might very easily produce Angry Young Women. With the Establishment busy liquidating the Empire, and the younger men being resolutely unheroic and unimperial, a girl might feel let down. The central thing about Miss Spark's men is that they do not do grand things or cause events to happen. They are not men to whom women can submit, and so the women, unshielded and unprotected, submit to the deadening forces of the world rather than the generating force of men.

I admit this is extravagant, but Ralph's cry, " 'Go away and leave me in peace,' " is singularly like the mood of Kingsley Amis or John Osborne. In any case, it does no harm to speculate. As a final note, in *The Ballad of Peckham Rye,* Miss Spark's fourth novel, the male character is in the center of the stage. He is, again, a snoop, but this time he causes things to happen. Still, he does not do things himself, and in the end he withdraws from the scene, while all along we have been aware that he is, perhaps, the devil and not a real man.

I hope that people will start reading Muriel Spark. She has already developed some remarkably interesting themes. Her work has a rare continuity that is exciting to investigate, and though she has made use of supernatural devices like the novelist at work in *The Comforters* and the telephone calls in *Memento Mori,* she has also been able to work out her themes in purely realistic terms in "The Go-Away Bird," which is her most accomplished piece of fiction to date.

The Writer vs. His Evidence

GRADUATE EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES. By BERNARD BERELSON. McGraw-Hill Book Co. 346 pp. $6.95.

Reviewed by LEWIS A. COSER

THIS VOLUME provides—as they say—a gold mine of information about the state of graduate studies in America. We learn from it that only less than a fourth of the faculty and a sixth of the deans of graduate schools believe that the schools are "doing reasonably well . . . in both quantity and quality." We discover that only 6 per cent of those who teach the graduate courses in political science, 21 per cent of those who teach sociology, and 10 per cent of those who teach English—as against 64 per cent teaching physics—judge the present state of their discipline to be "very satisfactory." We learn also that the majority of graduate deans and graduate faculty, as well as the majority of recent recipients of doctorates, believe that graduate instruction should be more academic—less specialized and less technical. The book is replete with such valuable information. Somewhat surprisingly, though,

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Dr. Berelson's interpretation of the facts given seems to be designed to explain away all of their perturbing aspects. I myself should like, therefore, to concentrate on Berelson's underlying assumptions.

Jacques Barzun, the dean of Columbia, recently asked: "Why has the American college and university so little connection with intellect?" Now Dr. Berelson, who is director of Columbia's Bureau of Social Research, seems to answer in effect: *Why should it have any?* He writes: "The graduate school should aim at training the skilled specialist—not . . . at producing the 'educated man,' the 'cultured man,' the 'wise man' (nor, for that matter, the 'mere technician,' either)." To Berelson, the graduate school is to be a training ground for marketable skills and for absorbing occupational norms. And such a description, as a matter of fact, would seem to be a realistic assessment of what graduate schools are now in process of becoming. One ought to be aware, surely, that Berelson's view, as well as this possible future of the graduate school, implies a complete break with the traditional conception of the university. It was held to be entirely self-evident, until quite recently, as J. H. Newman wrote in *On the Scope and Nature of University Education,* that:

> The culture of the intellect is a good in itself and its own end. . . . As the body may be sacrificed to some manual or other toil . . . so may the intellect be devoted to some specific profession; and I do not call *this* the culture of the intellect. . . . On the other hand, as the body may be tended, cherished and exercised with a simple view to its general health, so may the intellect also be generally exercised in order to perfect its state; and this is its cultivation.

Such cultivation and not the creation of marketable skills, has traditionally been thought the primary task of the university.

Views similar to Berelson's have, of course, been advanced before, but I doubt whether they have been put forward with so good a conscience. Earlier pioneers in the assault against cultivation still felt some need to bow ceremoniously to those ideals they were undermining; not so Berelson, who is free from any such residual pieties. Nothing is more indicative of his attitude than the language he uses when discussing institutions of higher learning: "It takes a long time to get *tooled up to a substantial rate of production*"; "The national supply [of Ph.D's] . . . will have to be produced by the institutions already *well in business*" (my italics). Berelson clearly envisages the production of Ph.D's as being not essentially dissimilar from the production of sausages. Since there will be more demand for Ph.D's from industry and government, and since the largest market for graduates will no longer be college teaching (only 20 per cent of the recent Ph.D's went into undergraduate teaching in liberal arts colleges), he therefore reasons that the graduate product should be tailored to fit the newer, larger market which calls for skilled specialits rather than cultivated men.

Reading Berelson's comments on and analyses of the questionnaire responses made by university and college administrators, graduate faculty, recent recipients of doctorates, and heads of industrial firms employing Ph.D's, I got a rather eery feeling of unreality. The picture he sketches does not at all resemble the university life I know. Most of us who teach in colleges and universities are aware of the widespread feeling of dissatisfaction among many—perhaps most—graduate students. One senses among the very best of them a revolt against the thinness and ritualism of much of the instruction they are given, the work they do, and against the uses to which they as students are put by senior professors and directors of research institutions. In my own experience the most frequent of all complaints heard from graduate students is that the university pressures them into premature specialization. How explain, then, the amazing disparity between Berelson's optimism and this kind of personal evidence from students themselves? Two factors are involved, I think: the nature of the sample, and the peculiar way in which Berelson has analyzed the responses.

Instead of questioning students still in graduate schools, Berelson went to those who had already passed successfully through the ordeal of the Ph.D requirements—who had, so to speak, their highly prized union card. Thus he was questioning only the survivors, but neglecting to hear the opinions

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of those who had not yet reached safety—or those who had dropped out of graduate school (for whatever reason: incompetence, discouragement, being alienated by the methods of instruction). But if Berelson gives us evaluations of the "successful," he does not give us any reason to believe that those who survived were the fittest. All that one can legitimately assert is that they survived.

When his respondents are critical—and this is frequently so, as the figures I quoted at the start of this review indicate—Berelson simply polemicizes against them, paying neither respect nor attention to adverse opinion. The majority of respondents state that graduate instruction should be more academic and less technical: Berelson brands this argument as reflecting sentimental attachment to "the good old days" and the prestige value of the term "academic." As to the finding that many who are critical of graduate programs in general are discontented with developments in their own discipline, he suggests that such criticism of all graduate instruction reflects dissatisfaction with their chosen discipline. "Just as the critics among recent recipients [of Ph.D's]," says Berelson, "do not like their jobs, so the critics among the faculty tend not to like the present character of their fields." The implication is that the criticism comes from malcontents, and need not be taken seriously. The notion is never entertained by Berelson that criticism—both of individual fields and of developments in the graduate schools—may be rooted in a justified dissatisfaction with what goes on in field and university, in research and teaching. Thus the respondents can't win: Berelson assumes from the outset that any criticism they make must be self-serving and unworthy.

Thorstein Veblen originally intended to subtitle *The Higher Learning in America* "A Study in Total Depravity." One need not share his animus to be appalled by Berelson's smugness. One would imagine that most observers would consider something to be wrong with an institution if only a relatively small minority of its leaders—in this case the faculty and academic administration—believe that it is doing "reasonably well." Not Mr. Berelson: he counters that the consumers—college presidents and industrial executives—are considerably less dissatisfied, and so long as they are pleased, there is no need to worry. In short, Berelson applies criteria relevant to market research to a study of the role of intellect in our culture.

Indeed, the valuable information about current graduate instruction in the U. S. which this study contains cannot be ignored by anyone concerned with the state of our culture. But this very information is not taken seriously by its own analyst. The Carnegie Foundation, sponsoring this investigation, made a serious mistake in the choice of somebody who condemns the life of the intellect. It is never wise, as the French say, to let the devil weed your garden.

Toward a History of the German Jews

YEAR BOOK OF THE LEO BAECK INSTITUTE. Vol 1, 446 pp.; Vol. II: THE LEGACY OF GERMAN JEWRY, 356 pp.; Vol. III: MEN AND EPOCHS IN GERMAN JEWRY, 416 pp.; Vol. IV: EVOLUTIONS OF IDEAS IN GERMAN JEWRY, 416 pp. Edited by Robert Weltsch. East and West Library.

AUFBAU IM UNTERGANG. By ERNST SIMON. J. C. B. Mohr (Tuebingen, West Germany). 108 pp.

OSTJUDEN IN DEUTSCHLAND, 1880–1940. By S. ADLER-RUDEL. J. C. B. Mohr. 169 pp.

Reviewed by ERNEST STOCK

THE publications of the Leo Baeck Institute, of which some sixteen have now appeared, have the common purpose of exploring the "spiritual features of German Jewry"—its "inner development in the fields of philosophy, religion, science, economics and art and . . . the external events which affected that development." These volumes include biography, correspondence, and monographs, as well as the first four in a series of Year Books, each containing about twenty contributions of almost uniform excellence. The aim of the Year Books, as outlined by their editor, Robert Weltsch, is to bring together eyewitness accounts by Jews to serve as the raw material for future historians in their analyses of the fateful encounter between Germany and its Jews. A number of

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these essays clearly transcend this unpretentious framework: anyone unwilling to wait for the future historians to shed light on why the German-Jewish "symbiosis" miscarried so abominably after it produced such impressive results, will find a good many answers suggested here.

Each of the four Year Books begins with an introduction by Weltsch, who for almost thirty years edited the Berlin *Juedische Rundschau,* one of the three Jewish weeklies of national circulation that, for all their didacticism, displayed standards of taste and intellectual maturity unknown to the Jewish press of our hemisphere. His contribution to the first volume in particular is a brilliant *tour d'horizon.* Germany, Weltsch maintains, was the birthplace of modern Judaism, and the pattern of the organized collective established by German Jewry came to exercise a decisive influence on all other Western Jewish communities—even though the peculiar blend of Jewish and European Christian civilization which it produced never appeared anywhere else. But this blend, which so suited the Jews, was distrusted by the Germans; with increasing stridency, they demanded total identification with the nation-state, and by so doing created a profound schism within the Jewish community: assimilationists countered German doubts of the Jews' *Deutschtum* with super-patriotism and sterile apologetics, while Zionists and Jewish nationalists called for a ruthless analysis of the Jewish position.

Weltsch—whose weekly was the organ of the German Zionists—is critical of the self-deception shown by both groups: of the way the assimilationists idealized emancipation long after events had exposed its fallacies, and of the way the Zionists exalted the image of a Jewish state which was not yet in existence and which could not possibly live up to their romanticized expectations.

When, finally, the Nazis prohibited Jews from describing themselves as members of the German people, the one refuge left was total identification with the Jewish group. As a result, Weltsch argues, the Nazi period from 1933–38 saw a remarkable revival, both spiritual and institutional, within German Jewry. Foundations had been laid earlier with the attempts to create a "Science of Judaism," to interpret Judaism in terms of contemporary philosophy, and to establish a pattern of modern Jewish education for both children and adults. But what was new in the Nazi period was the strong spirit of pride and certainty (sustained among young people particularly by the Zionist appeal), the organizational unity which made possible the establishment of an over-all representative body (the *Reichsvertretung*), and the intense artistic and cultural activity which developed overnight, with the press and publishing houses flourishing as never before.

Weltsch warns against overrating this upsurge. It was German Jewry's finest hour, he agrees, but it was the "defiant reaction of a deeply hurt mind to its affliction . . . a kind of euphoria before the end." And it is the end which must give the episode its eerie perspective. The startling outburst of Jewish creativity, the application of all the organizational, cultural, artistic, and educational talent as the community was gradually cut off from the nation's larger institutions—the reversion, in short, to something resembling the total Jewish community of pre-emancipation times—all this made sense and could happen only because the possibility of an Auschwitz "did not enter anyone's mind."

To a small minority of German Jewry—which increased somewhat each year after 1933—the events during that period appeared ominous enough to spur immediate emigration. This group consisted mainly of Zionists, and their migration during the first years of the Nazi regime was predominantly to Palestine. A second, larger group seems to have felt that the Nazis would not last, or that the regime's anti-Semitism was a temporary aberration. Should their estimate prove

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wrong, they believed, then emigration would still be possible as a last resort. This position, it appears, was also the official view of the *Reichsvertretung: "Die Emigration ist ein Ausweg, aber nicht der Weg"*—emigration is a way out, but not *the* way. *The* way, as it looked to the majority of German Jews, was a forced retreat from emancipation, a return to the ghetto community, with near autonomy as a recognized minority culture. To this situation the group adjusted itself with astounding rapidity—and docility.

The Nazis, by tightening their grip rather gradually, helped inspire complacency. At a nationwide conference of the *Kulturbund* in 1935, an official from Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry who was charged with supervising Jewish culture made a friendly speech explaining the efforts of his department much as a U.S. Department of Commerce spokesman might address a Rotary gathering on the government's attempt to stimulate business. Three years later, after the Crystal Night pogrom, the same Nazi ordered the *Kulturbund* to resume its "for Jews only" dramatic performances and even obtained the release of the required stage personnel from concentration camps.

The emphasis within the Jewish community was on "spiritual resistance" to the Nazis, and this in turn was mainly promoted by strengthening the individual from within, through adult education. Ernst Simon, who describes this program in one of the monographs of the Baeck Institute, *Aufbau im Untergang,* is well aware of its inadequacy to the Jewish plight. But he argues convincingly that the conditions which might have made mass physical resistance possible were lacking. He cites the large number of older people in the Jewish population, the emigration of many of the young, the geographical dispersal of Jewish settlements (even within the same city), and the relatively small role of both labor-socialist and Jewish-nationalist trends within German Jewry before 1933. It is also fairly obvious that the Jews as a group were inexperienced in political action; they had neither the organization nor the talent for improvising.

Consequently, German Jews looked for leadership from essentially spiritual rather than political personalities. Rabbi Leo Baeck is an example of the faithful shepherd who remained with his flock until the end. As head of the *Reichsvertretung,* his saintliness, brilliant intellectual qualities, and quiet dignity were a source of inspiration rather than exhortation. Martin Buber also emerges as a heroic figure: director of the Center for Adult Education, he too remained in Germany until a late hour, even though he was one of the very few who early recognized the Nazi danger for what it was, as well as being, like Simon, a veteran Zionist. His rebuttal of Protestant theologians corrupted by Nazi ideology, his speaking out on the "power of the spirit" to Jews and to Gentiles as well, represents resistance as far as it went.

EVEN BEFORE the Nazi period, German Jews had been made to feel self-conscious about "looking Jewish," and the reaction of many of them to the presence of the *Ostjuden* in their midst may be compared to that of the Jewish townspeople to the yeshiva principal in Philip Roth's story, "Eli, the Fanatic" (COMMENTARY, April 1959). Although few of the Polish Jews who settled in Germany wore ghetto attire, the stereotype of the "ghetto Jew" was alive, and the sensitivity of the German public to any type of foreign-seeming demeanor was extremely high. In the early 20's, though foreign Jews in Germany never numbered more than 125,000 (in a population of 63 million, of which half a million were Jews), this tiny minority was nevertheless a perennial subject of excited debate in provincial and national parliaments, as though it were about to devour German culture.

Shalom Adler-Rudel's careful study, *Ostjuden in Deutschland, 1880–1940,** however, makes the story of this symbiosis within a symbiosis appear somewhat brighter than it usually does in the public consciousness. He points out first that the German Jews, in resisting the influx from Eastern Europe, exemplified a general pattern—thus, when 20,000 Russian Jews were made homeless by a pogrom, there was much undignified dickering among American, Belgian, English, French, Austrian, and German Jews about finding a haven for them.

Though Adler-Rudel does not go into the

* Like Professor Simon's monograph, this book was expanded from an article originally contributed to the Year Book, where it appears in an English translation.

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less tangible aspects of the relationship between German and Eastern Jews after the post-World War I influx of refugees, it is also apparent that the conflict between the world of the East Europeans and the middle-class milieu of which the German Jews formed a part was exacerbated by the effect on German Jews themselves of both German xenophobia and anti-Semitism.

And yet there was another side to the story. The war experience of many German Jews had a profound impact on their attitude to their Eastern coreligionists: Adler-Rudel (himself of East European descent) writes movingly of the idealistic young men who were prompted by their first encounter with the "vital, healthy and rooted Jewishness" they discovered in Polish towns and villages to devote their lives to improving the status of Eastern Jewry in Germany. Among them were David Werner Senator, later vice president of the Hebrew University, and Siegfried Lehman, whose activity among Eastern Jewish youth culminated in the establishment of the well known Children's Village in Ben-Shemen, Israel. These men, together with others whose names are no longer familiar, first set up a kind of community center (*Volksheim*) in Berlin, where refugees from the East found a home atmosphere, culture, and social contacts; and later established the *Arbeiterfuersorgeamt*—Workers' Social Service Bureau—which for a decade was the refugees center of aid.

In general, then, the Leo Baeck publications provide ample material for a vital and often inspiring account of the five-generation history of German Jewry—from emancipation to annihilation. The significance of this history has been obscured too long by trite and oversimplified notions of German Jewish assimilationism. And as Robert Weltsch trenchantly remarks: "Nothing can help present-day Jewry in its confusion except clear thinking based on the study of the recent past. The history of nineteenth and twentieth century Jewry . . . is the indispensable precondition of Jewish self-analysis from which a more constructive all-Jewish *Weltanschauung* may grow. . . . While German Jewry is not the only factor worth investigating, in some respects . . . its history reflects perhaps in the purest form the problems from which springs present-day Jewish intellectual perplexity."

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Book Reviewers in This Issue

Richard J. Bernstein appears here for the first time. He is an assistant professor of philosophy at Yale.

R. H. S. Crossman, M.P., has long been prominent as an author and public figure in England. His own study of Israel, *A Nation Reborn,* was reviewed in our December issue.

Thomas Rogers, another new contributor, is a young novelist and critic who teaches English at the University of Chicago.

Lewis A. Coser, professor of sociology at Brandeis University, is currently in Norway on a Fulbright grant.

Ernest Stock has written for Commentary before. Born in Germany, he has studied here at Princeton and Columbia.

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...found a way to give you even higher octane for finer knock-free performance, still without adding lead.

Your Engine Runs Smoother, Cleaner
...spark plugs and valves give longer life, mufflers last longer. You'll save on costly tune-ups and repairs . . . with crystal-clear unleaded AMOCO.

So Fill Up With AMOCO Today. You'll find *the big difference in gasolines is crystal-clear.* This one-and-only unleaded gasoline is now greater than ever... *up* in knock-free performance for power and mileage.

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UNLEADED MOTOR FUEL
—costlier refining instead of lead

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